



NEWSLETTER

# eTIMES

## Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

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Third Quarter 2024/2025 October to December



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Markets
- Additional Funds Allocated for Repairs to St. Ann's Bay Market
- Additional Funds for Repairs to Ocho Rios Market – New Restrooms Opened
- Indigent Housing Programme
- Local Government and Community Month – November 2024

In the third Quarter of the 2024/2025 Financial Year, several initiatives and critical programmes/projects were undertaken and successfully completed. This measure of success was possible through the Ministry's collaboration with the Departments, Agencies and the Municipal Corporations.

# MARKETS

## Additional Funds Allocated for Repairs to St. Ann’s Bay Market

In October, Minister Desmond McKenzie, accompanied by Mayor Michael Belnavis and officials from the St. Ann Municipal Corporation, conducted a tour of the St. Ann’s Bay Market to assess the need for renovations. The Minister announced the allocation of an additional \$15 million for further repairs to the market, in addition to the ongoing renovation of bathroom facilities. The commitment of the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development to infrastructure and facilities for the communities in rural Jamaica remains unwavering. The tour of the market and the subsequent funding allocation demonstrate the dedication to enhancing public spaces and amenities.

In pointing out his own observations and concerns about the facility, Minister McKenzie noted that while other works are currently being carried out on some of the market’s infrastructure, there is a need for speedy rehabilitation of sidewalks and stalls, among other things.

“The vendors expressed to me very clearly when I last came here, the challenges that they are experiencing at the market, and I promised them that I would conduct an extensive tour, which is why we are here, to take a much closer examination of what is needed for this facility to

be operationally safe and pleasant in the short and medium term especially. I share their concerns about the impact of the current state of the market on their livelihoods, and so, in addition to the budgetary allocation which would have been made for work to be done here and at other markets, I am giving instructions for \$15 million to be released immediately, to address the most pressing concerns at this market for the vendors and shoppers alike.

This money will be provided to the St. Ann Municipal Corporation to address, among other things, the sidewalks. The market needs a visual lift, and repainting it will contribute significantly in this regard. I want to make it clear that this allocation will not fix all the matters that are outstanding at this market, but it will address the immediately critical areas. Where safety and convenience are concerned, we will have to look at the vending stalls as well. I am hoping and expecting that the vendors will co-operate with us and with the Municipal Corporation, as while we will be doing this project now, we still crave their patience and their understanding that Rome was not built in a day. The Government has been steadily improving the market infrastructure across the country, both through new construction and rehabilitation projects, and in this parish alone, substantial work has been done, including at the Brown’s Town and Ocho Rios Markets.



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## Additional Funds for Repairs to Ocho Rios Market – New Restrooms Opened

Minister of Local Government and Community Development Hon. Desmond McKenzie, has announced that greater resources will be provided to ensure that vital repairs are carried out at Ocho Rios Market in St. Ann.



In officially opening the newly constructed bathroom facilities at the market recently, the Minister noted that in addition to the original \$15 million that he had pledged for emergency repairs to the St. Ann's Bay Market at the end of September, the money to be spent at both markets will be more than doubled.

“We’re going to be providing an additional \$20 million for further works to be done at the Ocho Rios Market. Therefore, between the Ocho Rios Market, and the St. Ann’s Bay Market, your Government, the Government of Prime Minister Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness is giving \$35 million in less than one week for further improvements, to ensure your comfort and safety.”

The allocations will be made by the Ministry to the St. Ann Municipal Corporation, and works are scheduled to begin shortly.



# INDIGENT HOUSING PROGRAMME

## Families in Westmoreland, St. Thomas and St. Andrew Receive New Homes

This Ministry has been responsive at the local level, by providing aid to those in need and is committed to building more indigent housing solutions to address the needs of the poor. The Indigent Housing Programme involves the construction of modern concrete houses with proper amenities and conveniences to reflect the

Government's belief that the most vulnerable must also live in dignity. Jamaica has seen significant improvement in housing solutions, as the ministry has been touching lives across the island with these well-built, spacious, fully furnished, and comfortable houses.

### Westmoreland



Over the third quarter, the minister handed over five fully furnished houses. In Belvedere, Westmoreland, Mr. Lloyd East, and family were thrilled to receive the keys to their new fully furnished two-bedroom house. Mr. Clebert Vaz of Grange Hill also celebrated the handover of his newly constructed studio on Friday (October 11) with four more units to be presented in the parish. The Minister emphasized that the programme of building concrete houses for the indigent, which started during this Administration, is bringing hope and transforming the dynamics of daily life not only for the beneficiaries and their families, but for their communities.



*Speaking to JIS after the handover ceremony, Minister Desmond Mckenzie added that over \$350 million, so far has been spent on social projects in Westmoreland.*

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## St. Thomas

Additionally, the Ministry was able to handover one fully furnished unit on October 25, to a lovely family in St. Thomas, who lost their previous home to a fire. After losing her home to fire two years ago, Marsha Davis of Seaforth, St. Thomas, now has a new home, thanks to the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development's Indigent Housing Programme.

The Ministry, in fulfilling a commitment made publicly to Ms. Davis at the opening of the Yallahs Fire Station in 2022, delivered the keys to a furnished dwelling on Friday (October 25).

Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, speaking at the handover ceremony, shared that, "I recall distinctly that when we came to the parish to open the new fire station that this Administration built as a part of our commitment to the parish to improve the amenities that you have, the families were all-gathered there very distressed and asking for assistance."

"I committed the Minister of Local Government to ensure that the houses were built, and I am happy today to be

here to see the fulfilment, with Minister Desmond McKenzie, of that commitment made," he added.

Dr. Holness outlined that both the Indigent Housing Programme and the New Social Housing Programme are structured to provide housing for persons who are assessed as being poor and in need of housing support.

To date, 168 indigent housing units have been built under the Indigent Housing Programme and more than 310 houses delivered under the New Social Housing Programme.

For his part, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, said the Government is continuing to make the kind of investments in St. Thomas that will ensure that the parish "retains its prestige".

He noted that the community of Cheswick, in the Eastern section of the parish, is slated to have eight indigent housing solutions being delivered over the next couple of months.



*Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, Prime Minister and Hon. Desmond Mckenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development hand over a fully furnished two-bedroom unit to a family in St. Thomas who lost their home to fire.*

## St. Andrew

Hon. Desmond McKenzie accompanied by the Opposition Leader, Mr. Mark Golding and the Mayor of Kingston, His Worship Andrew Swaby, handed over two fully furnished units in Jones Town Community, Kingston on December 16. The Minister stated that these two units value a little under \$19 million. The Minister also

added that three more units are to be presented in the community. The Ministry is dedicated to supporting communities in need and is thankful for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of residents. This initiative not only provides housing but also fosters community development and empowerment.



*(L-R) Mrs. Marsha Henry-Martin, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, His Worship the Mayor Cllr. Andrew Swaby, Mayor of Kingston, Ms. Louise Newland, Cllr. Admiral Town Division, watch as Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, gives Ms. Ellenor Whyte, her keys. Looking on is Mr. Mark Golding, Leader of the Opposition.*



*(L-R) Mr. Robert Hill, CEO, KSAMC, His Worship the Mayor Cllr. Andrew Swaby, Mayor of Kingston, Mr. Mark Golding Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Carmel Maxwell, recipient, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Mrs. Marsha Henry-Martin, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, and Ms. Louise Newland, Cllr. Admiral Town Division.*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY MONTH – NOVEMBER 2024

November of this quarter was recognised as Local Government and Community Month under the theme, “Local Government at Work: Facing the Future Together.” Numerous activities were held in commemoration of the month. We kickstarted the celebrations with our annual National Church Service at the Webster Memorial United Church in Kingston. We hosted our first Youth Councillors’ Forum at the Golf View Hotel in Mandeville; each year an infirmary is selected for remedial works to be done and this year the St. Mary Infirmary was chosen. In an effort to engage with and raise awareness and interest among a

wide cross section of stakeholders by showcasing our services, highlighting our many programmes, initiatives, policies and the new developments ahead we hosted our biggest Local Government Expo at the National Indoor Sports Centre in Kingston – Students from more than thirty schools from across the island attended the Expo. We ended the month of activities with the Cook Off Competition at Pearly Beach in St. Ann, Youth Mayor courtesy calls, and social media publications/releases, among others.



*Members of the panel at the Youth Councillors Forum held at the Golf View Hotel, Manchester on November 28.*

The 2024/2025 cohort of Youth Mayors' paid courtesy calls on the Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, and Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Mark Golding. The Youth Mayors engaged the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in robust discussions surrounding Local and Central Government issues. The conversations were detailed and inspiring as they shared their views on the current state of societal

development and the areas in which they believe the Government can improve. These young leaders play an active role in community transformation and advocate for the importance of local government. Minister McKenzie emphasizes that the spotlight on Junior Councils will continue beyond November, highlighting their contributions throughout the year.



*2024/2025 Cohort of Youth Mayors pay a courtesy call on Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister at the Office of the Prime Minister.*



*2024/2025 Cohort of Youth Mayors pay a courtesy call on Mr. Mark Golding, the Leader of the Opposition.*

This year's celebration of Local Government Month aimed to broaden the nation's knowledge and understanding of the role/functions of Local Government, while also making an impact on several communities.

While a few initiatives for this quarter were closed to the public, the majority were open to the public and were met with positive interactions/feedback from the target audience which allowed for more sensitisation/ awareness about Local Government and its Agencies.



*Scan to download our Citizen's Charter.*

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