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THE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDICIARY LAUNCHES COMMISSION OF THE SENIOR JUDGES OF THE PARISH COURTS

The Judiciary of Jamaica has established the Commission of the Senior Judges of the Parish Courts to strengthen the leadership and management of the Parish Courts. The Commission, consisting of Senior Judges, will provide leadership to transform the lower courts into institutions of excellence through continuous improved results in the provision of sound, timely judgments and efficient legal services to Jamaicans.

Speaking at the virtual launch of the Commission on March 21, 2021, Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD said the Commission will help to align the objectives of the Parish Courts with the overall Strategic Plan of the Judiciary, which was unveiled in January last year.

“The Commission will also develop and oversee the implementation of best practices in all areas of the Parish Courts



Chief Justice the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD speaking at the virtual launch of the Commission of the Senior Judges of the Parish Courts on March 21, 2021.

and develop strategies to address weaknesses in operations and make recommendations to the Chief Justice and the Chief Judge of the Parish Courts regarding the administration of justice,” he said.

Chief Justice Sykes added: “In effect, it [Commission] is providing an incubator for future generation of court leaders

JUDICIARY LAUNCHES

COMMISSION OF THE SENIOR JUDGES OF THE PARISH COURTS

within the Parish Court system and beyond since many of the judges of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal began their judicial careers in these courts. It is vital then that we have an environment in which leadership talent can be identified, nurtured and developed for future service within the Judiciary.”



President of the Court of Appeal the Honourable Mr. Justice Patrick Brooks addressing the audience during the virtual launch of the Commission of the Senior Judges of the Parish Courts on March 21, 2021.

Swift Action

President of the Court of Appeal the Honourable Mr. Justice Patrick Brooks, OJ, CD, wants the newly formed Commission to address the issue of the preparation of records of appeal in a timely manner.

“We hope that the Commission will be able to develop a strategy for expediting the preparation and dispatch of those records to our courts. We wish this initiative well, we have every confidence that it will be successful,” Justice Brooks said.

Chief Justice of Singapore

The Honourable Chief Justice of Singapore Sundaresh Menon, who was the keynote speaker at the launch, said the Commission is a significant milestone in the transformation journey of the Jamaican court system.

Chief Justice Menon said judicial leadership is important to sustaining the journey towards court excellence, adding that “it is essential that the Judiciary takes the lead in driving policy that directly affects our ability to ensure the fair and efficient administration of justice.”

He added: “Let me congratulate Chief Justice Sykes and his team on the development of the Strategic Plan. The plan sets out a clear vision for the transformation of the court system; one that is truly by, for and of the Judiciary. It carefully explains how that vision will be achieved in concrete and practical terms. That if I may say, is an outstanding example of judicial leadership at an organizational level.”



The Honourable the Chief Justice of Singapore Sundaresh Menon, was the Guest Speaker at the launch of the Commission of the Senior Judges of the Parish Courts held on Sunday, March 21, 2021. The event is available for viewing on our Facebook page (The Judiciary of Jamaica) and our YouTube channel (Jamaican Judiciary).

JUDICIARY LAUNCHES

COMMISSION OF THE SENIOR JUDGES OF THE PARISH COURTS

Each Senior Parish Court Judge will be required to submit a monthly progress report on the operational plan of the court that he or she manages to the Strategic Planning Unit of the Court Administration Division for review and analysis. The members of the Commission will also ensure that there is a clear customer service programme being pursued in the courts to improve customer satisfaction. It will also implement programmes to bolster staff motivation.

The virtual launch was attended by court officials, Judges and Chief Justices from countries such as India, the United Kingdom, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Belize, The Bahamas and Guyana.

PARISH COURTS INCREASE CLEARANCE RATE DESPITE COVID -19



The Judiciary of Jamaica is reporting an increase in the clearance rate for Parish Courts last year despite the challenges of the coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic. The court clearance rate is measured in terms of the number of cases disposed of per 100 cases.

Speaking at the virtual launch of the Commission of Senior Judges of the Parish Court on March 21, 2021, Chief Justice Sykes said during the first quarter of 2020 (January to March), the Parish Court clearance rate for criminal matters was 96.47 per cent. This means that for every 100 cases coming in, 96 were disposed of.

He said that after Jamaica recorded its first case of COVID-19 in March, the courts started offering emergency services only.

“Understandably, within that context, the clearance rate [for criminal cases] fell to 51.50 per cent by the end of June, but then the recovery began. So, by December 31, 2020, the Parish Courts were disposing of 121 cases for every 100 cases coming in. I think that is a remarkable achievement and I think the Judges ought to be congratulated,” Sykes said.

File Photo: Westmoreland Parish Court. It is located in Norman Square in Savanna-la-Mar. The square, which has several other public buildings, is protected by Jamaican Law. This Act is known as the Norman Square Act of 1891. It is one of the two public squares in the island to be so protected by legislation. The other is that of Mandeville in Manchester.

PARISH COURTS INCREASE CLEARANCE RATE DESPITE COVID -19

As it relates to civil matters, he noted that the gross clearance rate at the end of December 2020 was 93 per cent.

“That is to say 93 cases were disposed of for every 100 cases coming in, which represented an increase in productivity for those courts. So, in other words, during a major crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic the courts have shown great resilience and have actually improved their output and productivity,” Sykes said.

He attributed the achievement of the Parish Courts to the hard work and commitment of the judges and court staff to the delivery of justice to Jamaicans.

“The figures bear this out, so we know that the courts are not as inefficient as persons were suggesting previous to the collection of statistics. Since 2016, we now know that 83 per cent of the cases filed in those courts are disposed of in less than 12 months. Our time standard is 24 months. We are aiming to have cases disposed of 24 months from the point of entry in any court,” he said.

Chief Justice Sykes noted that having courts that are disposing of 83 per cent of criminal cases in under 12 months is a remarkable achievement.

He said that of the cases filed in 2016 “we have a net backlog rate (cases older than 24 months) of under five per cent. If we extend the analysis even further, we will see that for all cases filed, our net backlog rate, which was 32 per cent in 2016, is now down to less than 10 per cent”.

INTERNET ACCESS AT EIGHT COURTS TO BE IMPROVED



File Photo:

The Honourable Delroy Chuck, QC, MP
Justice Minister

The internet connectivity and access at the islands courts are set to be improved as a result of a partnership between the Ministry of Justice and the National Works Agency (NWA).

In a statement in January, the Ministry of Justice said it is spending nearly five million dollars to provide fibre optic connection to eight courts to ensure high-speed reliable internet access of up to 100 Mbps to facilitate web-based services.

Courts included in the fibre optic upgrade are the Court of Appeal; the Supreme Court; four parish courts; the Coroner's Court in Kingston; and the St Andrew Family Court. Four of the locations have already been connected, with the rest slated for completion before the end of the current financial year, the Ministry of Justice said in a statement.

INTERNET ACCESS AT EIGHT COURTS TO BE IMPROVED

Justice Minister Delroy Chuck, MP, QC, said the enhanced connectivity is part of his administration's push to employ technology to enhance the efficiency of court operations.

“As we adapt to the exigencies of this COVID-19 era of virtual engagement, unimpeded internet connectivity is a key requirement for business operations. This improved technology provides the framework to more seamlessly virtualize proceedings such as court hearings,” Mr. Chuck said.

The statement added that the fibre optic connectivity will also be used to bolster the new Judicial Case Management System (JCMS), which will manage jury selection; case flow and scheduling; and transcript production. The JCMS is currently being piloted in several courts.

COURTS TO GET NEW CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Judiciary of Jamaica will begin the phased roll-out of the Judicial Case Management System (JCMS), which is a web-based system integrating all courts on a single platform, is to begin within the next financial year. Effective April 2021, the JCMS will be rolled-out in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. The JCMS will assist the Judiciary in the achieving some of its key targets outlined in its Strategic Plan *‘Benchmarking the Future: Courting Success’* including digitizing some court processes, building an improved record keeping and retrieval system and reducing delays and adjournments. As a result, the JCMS will help the Judiciary on its way to becoming the best in the Caribbean in 2023 and among the best globally in 2025.

Chief Court Statistician Dr. Denarto Dennis sat down with Director of the Client Services, Communications and Information Mrs. Kadiesh Fletcher to explain how the game-changing JCMS software will digitize some court processes and how it will result in enhanced operational efficiency.

Kadiesh Fletcher: What is the Judicial Case Management System (JCMS)?

Dr. Denarto Dennis: The Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) is a new case management and data capturing platform that is expected to be rolled out in the courts in 2021. It's expected to replace the existing data capturing systems: the Case Information Statistical System (CISS), Judicial Enforcement Management Systems (JEMS) in the Supreme Court and possibly the Traffic Ticket Management Systems (TTMS) platform in the Traffic Courts. So, this is a web-based system, which will integrate all courts islandwide and across jurisdictions on a single platform. Data will be inputted in real time or as close as possible to real time based on the re-engineered business processes. The data will be available in close to real time, which will be a substantial improvement from our current situation where there is always a lag between the completion of the data inputs for any particular period and the availability of that data for processing.

Kadiesh Fletcher: How will staff be impacted by the implementation of the JCMS?

Dr. Denarto Dennis: In the Parish Courts, the work of the Assistant Clerk in particular will be fundamentally impacted. There will have to be some amount of repurposing. The extent of repurposing will be based on the state of the court. When I say

COURTS TO GET NEW CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

the state of the court, I mean the availability of resources in courtrooms, and in registries, plus also the number of Assistant Clerks that are available at that particular court's disposition. But in general what you can expect is that the Assistant Clerk will play a greater role in court in the live environment, in the setting of future dates and the closing of existing dates. That is what partly substitutes for the front ending of the information that is necessary to generate the court list that they would ordinarily write in the book. That will be fundamentally affected. The other thing that will be fundamentally affected is that the manner, in which the court list is generated, will now be very different. It's going to be digital. The Assistant Clerks will be playing a bigger role in the live court environment, in the closing of dates, the setting of future dates digitally and also in registering new cases in the system, that's another aspect as well. The Assistant Clerk will have to play a significant role in interacting with the system; putting in new cases in the system as they come. For some business lines, of course different business lines operate slightly differently, but for some business line they will have to play a central role in a system. This won't be a responsibility that they absorb solely. But they will play a role in putting on new cases as well. Of course, Data Entry Clerks will play a significant role in that function as well.

Kadiesh Fletcher: How will the JCMS impact the way attorneys interact with the courts?

Dr. Denarto Dennis: There is an attorney portal in the system or a web portal that is linked to the system. How this will work is that they will make an application to the particular registry. The Registrar or Deputy Registrar will review, authorize and issue an ID with the necessary access credentials to that particular attorney. Firstly, attorneys will be able to file civil cases and other cases including estate matters, matrimonial and commercial electronically. There will be designated officers in the court to vet these submissions that are made to determine, if the filings are adequate to support judicial formation and whatever feedback needs to be remitted to the attorneys, then that officer will coordinate the digital responses. Secondly, the attorneys will be able to constantly check on the status of their cases. So the attorney can check to see future date set, last date of appearance if a requisition was issued for the matter, what is the status of the review of that requisition. Nonetheless, an attorney can still file a case manually at the window. That alternative is still there in the interest of access to justice.

Kadiesh Fletcher: Is this a one-off accreditation or do attorneys need to do it for each case that they are filing?

Dr. Denarto Dennis: It is renewable annually at the moment. So we can always in the future look at whether it needs to be a more extended timeline, two years, three years, but initially we want to start with a one-year access provisioning and then you renew when it is expired. The accreditation is free of cost to attorneys.

Kadiesh Fletcher: Will members of the public have access to this system?

Dr. Denarto Dennis: While the public initially will not be provisioned to file cases in the type of way that attorneys will be, members of the public will be able to check the public portal to check on the status of their cases. So John Brown can just go on the system at any time, type in his case number or even his name and of course further search information will be required of him. He will have limited access to his files. In other words, members of the public will only have summary information of the status of their matters including where the matters are in the court system, the dates that their matters would have appeared before the court in the past and the next date it is set to appear in the court. Is my case active? Is it pending? Has my Decree Absolute been granted? Is my divorce matter at a Decree Nisi stage?

Kadiesh Fletcher: Will there be any changes to our scheduling practices as a result of the JCMS?

COURTS TO GET NEW CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Dr. Denarto Dennis: That's a good question. The system does allow the courts to be very surgical and scientific in the way in which we manage our schedule. What do I mean by that? The system is designed to regulate clashes. So if a matter was scheduled for 10:00 a.m. in courtroom two (2) and there is another person that is attempting to schedule that same time,

date and courtroom, or even a judge to schedule those resources, the system will create a flag to say that resource is out of capacity or in other words not available. So there is the regulation of dates, time, courtroom and judges to prevent clashes.



Plus, it's important to point out that the system manages your history. So if John Brown has four (4) bench warrants outstanding for him, let's say four bench warrants on traffic tickets and he comes before court X, immediately as his information is put into the system, the system will create a flag to say, John Brown has four bench warrants outstanding for him. If an attorney is added to a case, the system will also tell you that this attorney has a hundred cases in this court, automatic information that pops up. The same way for case participants like the accused, complainants, defendants, the system automatically just tell you how many matters you have in the court. All citizens that have a TRN and or voter's ID will be preloaded into the system.

Director (Acting) of Client Services, Communications and Information Mrs. Kadiesh Fletcher interviewing Chief Court Statistician Dr. Denarto Dennis on January 21, 2021. at the Supreme Court in Kingston.

Kadiesh Fletcher: This is now speaking to jury duty, Dr. Dennis. I gather that the system will now automatically generate the jury list and the summons.

Dr. Denarto Dennis: That is correct. That is another important benefit of the system. The jury list and the jury summons will be generated automatically by the system based on the pre-loading of the demographic information of the citizens. It will also prevent an individual from serving as a juror three times for one year. So if John Brown was selected and empanelled in the Hilary Term, the first court term of the year, then the system automatically excludes John Brown from the algorithm for selection for the rest of the year. Consequently, it will broaden the pool of persons participating in the jury process. Based on the preloading of the TRN and the voter's list, we will be able as a court system to define any number of persons we want to select or to be served for jury duty at any given time for any parish.

COURT OF APPEAL NOW HAS FULL COMPLEMENT OF JUDGES



Pictured are: Justice Patrick Brooks (left), President of the Court of Appeal; and Chief Justice Bryan Sykes (right), along with the newly appointed members of the Justice System – from second left, front row: Justice Vivene Harris, Judge of Appeal; Stephany Orr, Acting Master-in-Chambers; Tara Carr, Acting Puisne Judge; and Carole Barnaby, Puisne Judge. In second row, from left: Annmarie Lawrence-Grainger, Acting Puisne Judge; Master Pamela Mason, Acting Puisne Judge; Vaughn Smith, Acting Puisne Judge; Sherna Reid-Clayton, Acting Master-in-Chambers; Icolin Reid, Acting Puisne Judge; and Kamar Anderson, Master-in-Chambers.

The Court of Appeal now has its full complement of 13 judges after the Honourable Ms. Justice Vivene Harris was appointed to the court while the Honourable Mrs. Justice Marcia Dunbar-Green was appointed a week after to act as a judge of Appeal in January.

Despite the amendment to the Judicature (Appellate Jurisdiction) Act in 2008, increasing the number of judges from seven (7) to thirteen (13), the full complement could not be appointed due to inadequate space at the court. As such, the Court of Appeal building located on King Street in Kingston was expanded to accommodate the increased number of judges.

Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD said already the Court of Appeal is reporting an increase in the number of judgments it has delivered since additional judges were added to the bench in 2019.

“In 2018, the Court [of Appeal] delivered 61.85% of judgments within six months of being reserved. There was an improvement in 2019 to 65.18% and in 2020, based on preliminary figures, the Court is expected to be up to 73% up to 85%,” Chief Justice Sykes.

He also attributed the success of the Court of Appeal to the necessary support staff provided to judges including one judicial clerk to each judge.

Other Appointments

Also taking the Oath of Office were Kamar Henry-Anderson, who has been appointed Master-in-Chambers; and Stephany Orr and Sherna Reid-Clayton as Acting Masters-in-Chambers. Their appointments took effect on January 7.

Meanwhile, the Honourable Ms. Carole Barnaby has been appointed Puisne Judge; while the Honourable Ms.

COURT OF APPEAL NOW HAS FULL COMPLEMENT OF JUDGES

Justice Icolin Reid, the Honourable Mr. Justice Vaughn Smith and the Honourable Ms. Justice Tara Carr were promoted to Acting Puisne Judges. The Honourable Ms. Justice Pamela Mason and the Honourable Mrs. Ann-Marie Lawrence-Granger are to act as Puisne Judges until March 26, 2021.

Chief Justice Sykes noted that Justices Smith, Reid and Carr served in Parish Courts (Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Court, Westmoreland Parish Court and St. Catherine Parish Court respectively) that carry the heaviest caseload in terms of criminal cases. Nonetheless, these Courts have been consistently ranked among the best performing Parish Courts over the past four years. He also noted that last year was challenging for Parish Courts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“In the first quarter of last year, clearance rate was 96.47% understanding that by June of last year, it had fallen to 51.50% because of the COVID-19 crisis. But by September, they were up to 78.3% showing the resilience of these courts and the judges that are working there under difficult condition to have that turn around; having regard to the COVID-19 crisis in under three months, I think is nothing short of remarkable,” Chief Justice Sykes said.

Revenue Court

Chief Justice Sykes announced that Revenue Court should be hearing current matters by June 2021. He said since Justice Barnaby has been serving the Revenue Court, she and others have produced a substantial document for improving efficiency and productivity within the Court.

“Her appointment is a recognition like Justice Vivene Harris not just on legal acumen but also a willingness to work and a willingness to make a contribution to the overall achievement of the Court and to the well-being of their colleagues. These are some of the qualities we look for in selecting judges...,” Justice Sykes said.

Meanwhile, President of the Court of Appeal, the Honourable Mr. Justice Patrick Brooks, OJ, CD, said he has watched most of the appointees take their early steps in the profession and now they have matured into confident judicial officers.

“They are more than capable of taking on the tasks, which are required by their various appointments. They have demonstrated in their careers, thus far, the integrity which you spoke about earlier, that is required of judges, and I assure you that the future of the Judiciary looks bright...,” Justice Brooks said.

Responding on behalf of the Judges, Justice Harris thanked the members of the Judicial Services Commission for the confidence they have reposed in them and reminded her colleagues that they must be fervent in the execution of their duties especially in the COVID-19 pandemic.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS: JUDGES OF APPEAL



The Honourable Mr Justice Patrick Brooks, OJ, CD was appointed a Judge of Appeal on January 16, 2012. He was sworn in as President of the Court of Appeal on December 7, 2020.



The Honourable Miss Justice Hilary Phillips was appointed a Judge of Appeal on August 3, 2009.

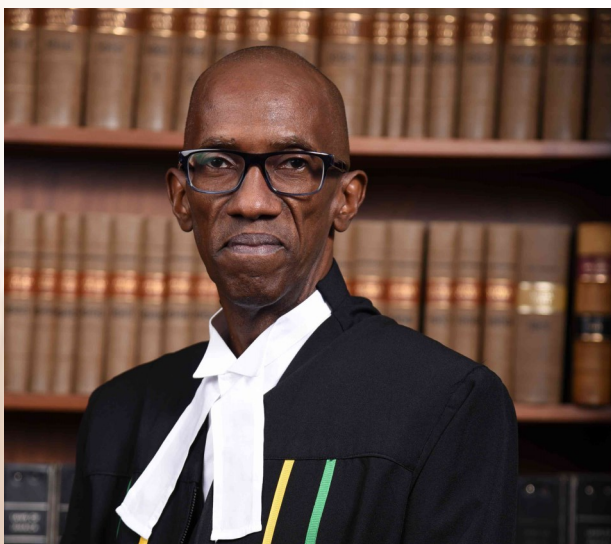


The Honourable Mrs Justice Marva McDonald-Bishop was appointed a Judge of Appeal on September 21, 2015.



The Honourable Mrs Justice Almarie Sinclair-Haynes was appointed a Judge of Appeal on November 16, 2015.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS: JUDGES OF APPEAL



The Honourable Mr Justice Frank Williams was appointed a Judge of Appeal on March 29, 2016.



The Honourable Miss Justice Paulette Williams was appointed a Judge of Appeal on September 19, 2016.



The Honourable Miss Justice Jennifer Straw was appointed a Judge of Appeal on January 14, 2019.



The Honourable Miss Justice Carol Edwards was appointed a Judge of Appeal on January 14, 2019.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS: JUDGES OF APPEAL



The Honourable Mrs Justice Nicole Foster-Pusey was appointed a Judge of Appeal to the Court of Appeal on January 14, 2019.



The Honourable Miss Justice Simmons was appointed a Judge of Appeal on September 21, 2020.



The Honourable Mr Justice David Fraser was appointed a Judge of Appeal on September 21, 2020.



The Honourable Mrs Justice Vivene Harris was appointed a Judge of Appeal on January 11, 2021.

CAD PARTNERS WITH HEART/NSTA TRUST TO CERTIFY STAFF IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

More than seventy frontline workers at the Court Administration Division (CAD) and courts islandwide have received training in customer service as the Judiciary moves to bolster the capacity of staff to deliver a professional service to customer and improve customer satisfaction.

The training, which is a partnership between the HEART/NSTA Trust and the CAD, was delivered using a blended approach between February 1 and March 16, 2021. The training covered among other things handling telephone calls, resolving customer disputes, building customer relations and communicating effectively in the business environment. Participants were divided into four divisions based on the location of the courts they are employed to.

Customer Service Coordinator at the CAD, Mrs. Janet Duffus-Beale, said “the training sessions are also aimed at achieving the Judiciary’s strategic target of improving service delivery throughout the courts.”

Participants

Ms. Tashae Grant, an employee of Hanover Parish Court, said the training sessions have deepened her knowledge about customer service.

“The training has helped me immensely with my skills for work and how to assess situations and complaints by customers,” Ms. Grant said.

Another participant, Mr. Adriel Williams who works at the Court of Appeal, said “I have already started to employ some of the techniques and strategies taught in the sessions in my interactions with both court users and my fellow colleagues, to good effect as well. And I can see where it is paying dividends.”

Miss Zoey Copeland, who is employed at the Manchester Parish Court, said she has been sharing tips on improving customer service from the sessions with her colleagues.

“I started informing my co-workers of what was taught in the session and I have seen where changes are being made,” Ms. Copeland said.

A staff at St. Ann Parish Court, Mrs Nordia Barnett-Dundas, said she is always intrigued by the soft skills of a professional customer service agent.

“As such my expectations, upon entering this course, were geared towards developing such skills in order to become more effective at my job. To some extent my expectations were met as I have become more cognizant of the need to serve my customer in a way that fulfils their expectations, thus contribution to a good reputation for my organization.”

Certification

The employees are expected to sit an examination at a later date. Once they have successfully completed the examination, they will receive an National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 in Customer Service. As a result, they will be certified Customer Care Representatives.

Mrs. Duffus-Beale said “the certification will demonstrate that the participants have achieved the knowledge, the skills and attitudes necessary to deliver excellent customer service.”

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS: CAD PARTNERS WITH HEART/NSTA TRUST TO CERTIFY STAFF IN CUSTOMER SERVICE



Participants in Region Three (Clarendon, Manchester and St. Elizabeth) look on as some of their colleagues engage in role playing. The in-person session for Region Three was held at Tropics View Hotel in Mandeville, Manchester.



Mrs. Samantha Levy, who is employed to the Special Coroner's Court, engages her fellow trainees during a group presentation at the in-person session held at the Ministry of Justice for Region One (St. Thomas, St. Catherine, Kingston and St. Andrew) on February 16, 2021.



The in-person training session for Region Two (Trelawny, St. James, Hanover, Westmoreland) was held at the Iberostar Hotel in Montego Bay, St. James.



Participants from Region One (St. Thomas, St. Catherine and Kingston & St. Andrew) are locked in as Facilitator Miss Dawn Petgrave imparts her knowledge to them in the area of customer service.

DIRECT DEPOSIT TO TRANSFORM PAYMENT SYSTEM AT THE COURTS



The Judiciary of Jamaica has introduced direct deposit payments as a more efficient and convenient way to collect maintenance, jury duty stipends and reimbursement of bail bonds from the relevant courts.

Director of Court Administration, Mrs. Tricia Cameron-Anglin, described direct deposit as game-changing for the courts, adding that several cheques have become stale-dated because of non-collection. This forms part of the Judiciary's strategic plan to make the courts more efficient and more service-oriented.

As a result, Mrs. Cameron-Anglin said direct deposit will assist Court Administration Division (CAD) in improving its internal payment process. She also noted that recipients of maintenance monies can also benefit from the direct deposit, an additional option to the Cash Card, which they already use.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Cameron-Anglin is encouraging court users to utilize other payment options such as; point of sale (POS) and Cash Card for an efficient, convenient and reliable customer experience at the courts.

She said persons who do not have bank accounts are encouraged to utilise the Cash Card system. The Cash Card is a payment method that allows persons to collect maintenance payments using their Cash Cards, even if they do not have bank accounts.

Additionally, persons paying fines for traffic tickets, bail bonds and maintenance payments may use the POS machines, which accept both debit and credit cards, and are available at all courts, which collect such fines.

How to get information

Persons wishing to sign up for direct deposit can visit their nearest court office. The form is available online at www.cad.gov.jm. For further information, you may contact the CAD at 876-754-8337.





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FAMILY COURTS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN MANCHESTER AND ST. ANN



File Photo: Fire personnel at the Manchester Parish Court after extinguishing a fire November 6, 2019. Built in 1817, the Georgian-styled former Manchester Parish Court is the oldest building in Mandeville Square. It is being renovated by the Ministry of Justice at a cost of \$50M and will be operated as a Family Court for the parish.

restroom facilities; and a receptionist/lobby area.

A dedicated Family Court is to be established in Manchester and St. Ann as part of the Government's focus on increasing access to legal services in these parishes.

The Family Court in Manchester will be located at the building that used to house the Manchester Parish Court. The Manchester Parish Court was relocated in November 2019 after fire damaged the upper storey of the historic building. The Ministry of Justice is undertaking work to renovate the building.

In a statement issued in January, the Ministry of Justice said the building is scheduled for operationalization in the first quarter of the 2021/22 Financial Year and will comprise a courtroom; Judges' Chambers; office and administrative spaces;

Scope of work for the project includes repairing the fire-damaged section of the roof; upgrading the electrical and mechanical systems; and retrofitting and renovating approximately 6,000 square feet of gross floor area. The contract for the construction is valued at approximately \$50 million.

Justice Minister Delroy Chuck, MP, QC added that the building will be enhanced to include child-friendly waiting and holding areas.

"We are working assiduously to ensure that our courts have the calibre of amenities that can withstand scrutiny in any jurisdiction, and allow for comfort and efficiency as Jamaicans conduct their business," Mr. Chuck said.

St. Ann Family Court

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice in February signed a contract valued at \$90.87 million with Contraxx Enterprise Limited, for the establishment of a Family Court in St. Ann's Bay, St. Ann.

The scope of work will include the retrofitting and internal renovation of a two-storey concrete building; establishment of a fit-for-purpose facility comprising courtrooms, Judges' Chambers, office spaces, restroom

FAMILY COURTS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN MANCHESTER AND ST. ANN (CONT'D)



Justice Minister the Hon. Delroy Chuck, MP, QC (seated left); Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice Sancia Bennett-Templer; and Managing Director of Contraxx Enterprise Limited, Stephen Chung (seated right), signing a contract valued at \$90.87 million for the establishment of a Family Court in St. Ann, at the Ministry of Justice in St. Andrew, on February 24, 2021. Sharing in the moment (from left) are: Chief Justice the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD and Chief Judge of the Parish Courts, His Honour Mr. Chester Crooks.

facilities, lobby area, welfare facilities, child-friendly waiting and holding areas, access staircase and associated external works. It is expected that the project will get under way in short order and be completed by October.

Meanwhile, Chief Justice, Bryan Sykes, welcomed the establishment of the St. Ann Family Court facility, noting that it will provide much needed assistance to families “when they have the kinds of matters that are best suited for those courts”.

“It is a welcome development, and one of my expectations is that at the end of my tenure as Chief Justice, which is few short years away, we will have a family court in each parish,” he said.

Family Division of the Supreme Court


Meanwhile, the Chief Justice said discussion is underway with a

view of having a Family Division within the Supreme Court.

“We are thinking of establishing a Family Division within the Supreme Court where we can have a career path regarding judges who may prefer to work in that area of law and can see that it is worthwhile remaining there so that there is a path to the Supreme Court and ultimately to the Court of Appeal,” he said.

Family courts have been established in Kingston and St. Andrew, Trelawny, St. James, Hanover, Westmoreland, and Clarendon.

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Jury trials resumed in February on a phased basis for the Home Circuit Court and some Rural Circuit Courts of the Hilary Term after they came to a halt last year March when Jamaica recorded its first case of COVID-19. However, that was short-lived as the Judiciary had to suspend jury trials the following month due to a surge in COVID-19 cases.

As a result of the suspension of jury trials, jurors have been discharged without any risk of penalty. Nonetheless, cases triable without a jury, can proceed.

During the phased resumption, jury trials only took place at courts that could accommodate jurors with adequate space for physical distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These include St. Catherine, St. James, Portland, St. Mary, Westmoreland and Hanover. In order to accommodate jury trials, the Judiciary used two courtrooms to hear a single matter and transferred matters that would usually be dealt with at the Parish Courts to outstations to facilitate physical distancing.

Additionally, the Judiciary of Jamaica only facilitated trials with three or more defendants only if the Judge is satisfied that the trials can proceed without violating the "Health Guidelines Governing Access to All the Courts of Jamaica" having regard to:

- The number of attorneys representing the Crown and the defence;
- The number of witnesses;
- Whether the defendants can be accommodated in the courtroom
- Whether the evidence is to be given orally, remotely and/or by agreed statements of agreed facts



MINISTRY OF
**HEALTH &
WELLNESS**

VAX FACTS

HOW DO VACCINES WORK?

Vaccines work with your body's natural defense to build protection. When vaccinated, your immune system is able to:

- o Recognize the invading germ (e.g. virus or bacteria)
- o Produce antibodies that fight and destroy the germ before you become unwell.



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