



Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council

1630 on Thursday 10th October 2019 at the Court House

MEETING SUMMARY

Present:

Steven Chandler, HH Administrator	Councillor Katharyn Chadwick
Catherine Leo, Assistant Director (Finance)	Councillor Andrew Ellick
Rob Cheeseman, Crown Counsel	Councillor Keturah George
	Councillor Andrew Hobson
	Councillor Alan Nicholls

In attendance:

Linda Hardiman, Head of Administrator's Office
Alasdair Bain, Policy Officer
Jane Disley, Clerk of Council

3. Matters arising (from formal meetings on 22 Aug and 27 Sep): **MPA Designation.** (Update: the MPA designation (with conditions) had been actioned and publicised. The period from now until the UK Govt spending review in 2020 would be used to continually improve the draft MPA Mgt Plan via liaison with external experts. The draft Plan would be presented to councillors for review at a pertinent date in future). Other topics were discussed as part of specific agenda items below or were recorded as 'action completed'.

4. OTs/UK Joint Ministerial Council (JMC): Councillors nominated Cllr Nicholls to represent Ascension at November's JMC. A pre-JMC planning meeting had taken place earlier on 10 October by teleconference and was attended by the Administrator, Policy Officer and Cllr Nicholls. Further discussions would take place to support Cllr Nicholls' JMC preparations (and travel arrangements) in order that councillors' views would be appropriately represented.

5. Council Committees: Two committees were proposed to cover **Public Works** and **Welfare**. The Governor would be asked to agree and establish these committees. Nominations to the mandatory Finance Committee were also proposed. Councillors also proposed that a councillor attend the Ascension Island Safeguarding of Children Board (AISCB). Action: the Administrator would write to the Governor and also consider the request to attend the AISCB.

6. Employment Legislation: The Policy Officer presented an information note on modernising employment legislation which provided background information on previous work that had stalled in 2017. It set out AIG's staged approach to resurrecting this work with a view to agreeing a new Employment Ordinance after suitable consultation with the Council, employers, the public and the UK Govt. Action: the subject would be tabled at a future Council meeting in around a month's time, supported by a draft Ordinance and explanatory note setting out proposed provisions in detail to facilitate a more informed discussion.

7. Hydroponics: Noting that the previous Council had started to consider views on the future of Ascension's hydroponics operation in July and August, discussion covered the economics of continuing to operate at a significant financial loss, the need for food security and the importance of providing fresh produce for good health. Councillors felt further investigation and analysis were

required before future options and decisions could be realistically evaluated and made. Action: AIG would provide a more detailed financial analysis covering the current three month period to the end of 2019; would explore options for (i) leasing the operation as a private business, (ii) seeking advice from the Blue Marine Foundation adviser based on St Helena, (iii) reducing costs of utilities; and would continue to research other alternatives. Cllrs Hobson and Chadwick offered their time in support of this activity.

8. Strategic Plan: A proposal to develop an Ascension Island Strategic Plan was shared by Cllr Hobson. The Administrator agreed a strategic vision was needed and such a Plan would be useful to articulate where the island is going and the actions needed to make progress, whilst being cognisant of the UK Govt's Future of Ascension workstream. He intended to fold this suggestion into the budget planning work the Director of Resources would initiate on his return to island in mid-October, via review and discussion with councillors primarily through the Council's Finance Committee.

9. Further education: Cllr Chadwick sought greater engagement with St Helena in order to enhance further education opportunities for young people and adults on Ascension. It was noted that similar work was already being undertaken by Two Boats School teachers and Governors, and it was likely that St Helena's Director of Education would support efforts to encourage participation in their online courses. Further discussion and research was required to determine practical steps that could be taken and to dovetail with similar work understood to already be taking place. Action: Cllr Chadwick would pursue this and report via the Welfare Committee once it had been set up.

10. Any other business: (a) **Waste Collection**: AIG noted its intention to reduce waste collection from 3 to 2 days a week in order to use the incinerator more efficiently and therefore save money. (Action: The impact would be reviewed and reported on in February); (b) **Georgetown swimming pool**: the pool had been jet-washed and painted, changing room refurbishment was ongoing, ladders had been affixed and a Legionella plan was being written. (Action: The opening date would be confirmed soon but was likely to be the end of Oct or early Nov); (c) **AIG website**: the website was near completion; final details and design tweaks would be made, followed by proof-reading and user testing; (d) **Meeting actions**: there was some discussion about how best to ensure AIG and Council actions were recorded and progressed. (Action: The Clerk would publish an actions tracker, one item of which would be for the Administrator to review the draft Council Protocols document and report back); (e) **Street lighting trial**: some of the lights had arrived and plans were in place for their installation in Georgetown and Two Boats. Once all parts had been delivered the lights would be installed and the trial would begin.

11. Date of next meetings: The following forthcoming dates have been agreed:

- Informal – 24 Oct at 1000 (Cllr Ellick unavailable at 1630)
- Formal – 7 Nov at 1630
- Informal – 21 Nov at 1630

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 1820hrs.

J Disley

Jane Disley

Clerk of Council