



**Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council  
1630 on Thursday 21 Nov 2019 at the Court House**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

Present: HH Steven Chandler, Administrator  
Gareth Morris, Director of Resources  
Rob Cheeseman, Crown Council  
Councillor Katharyn Chadwick  
Councillor Kitty George  
Councillor Andrew Hobson  
Councillor Alan Nicholls

In attendance: Linda Hardiman, Head of Administrator's Office  
Dave Kewley, Police Inspector  
Jane Disley, Clerk of Council  
Apologies:  
Councillor Andrew Ellick [working]

The matters arising were addressed via the new actions tracker and current topics discussed were as follows: **Hydroponics** (the Policy Officer/Ops Mgr had had a meeting with Agriculture & Natural Resources Division in St Helena with a view to providing training on Ascension and were planning a visit for councillors to the hydroponics facilities); **Street lighting trial** (the concrete base design had been approved so the trial could begin); **Ops overtime** (this was currently 60% of last year's level, but the desire to reduce the need for overtime work had to be balanced against the impact that might have on the government's ability to reduce substantive headcount); **Optician complaints** (the optician saw 195 people over 3 weeks, 80 pairs of glasses were ordered and 6 only complaints had been received, although the need to survey all customers was reaffirmed); **Employment law reform away day** (Policy Officer/CC have been aiming to find a date to meet before the next flight although indications at the meeting were that this would be unlikely to be feasible and so dates in the New Year would need to be considered); **Public holidays 2020** (the Clerk had received all relevant approvals from the Governor and would submit a public notice for next week's Islander).

Inspector Kewley provided some background information about the proposed **Firearms Ordinance**. There was some discussion surrounding dealing with weapons once a certificate has been revoked, clarification of terminology, applicability of the legislation and likely charges for permits. Council members were generally content, although more time was required for review and feedback. Subject to members' feedback and any necessary changes, it was intended that the amended draft Ordinance would be brought before the next formal Council meeting for a decision.

A set of draft **Council protocols/rules** had been proposed and was generally considered useful, although a few minor alternations were required. It was felt that Council business needed to be more open and available for public access, especially to engage younger people eg via a Facebook group and perhaps with the agendas/meeting summaries published in the Islander. With minor tweaks as discussed, the protocol would be brought before the next formal meeting for a decision.

There was some discussion of about the need for **Council committee purposes** to be clear. Once the purpose had been agreed the terms of reference should be straightforward. It was proposed that the purposes make reference to committees being 'instructed' by Council to investigate some topic or issue within their remit. The information note would be amended suitably and shared with Councillors before being presented to the Governor for a decision.

The low turnout (29%) at the recent **Council election** was discussed. Various suggested reasons were offered eg some people felt that the government/Council did nothing for them or did not understand what the Council did. Transparency and communication were considered essential to engage the public, along with the ability to demonstrate that the Council made a difference to people's lives. The suggestion was

made that the Council could inform the public on topics of public interest or concern, such the Georgetown pool works, via a regular Council piece in the Islander.

The Finance Committee had met recently and set a timetable for forthcoming work. There would be a more in-depth update at the formal meeting on 18 Dec.

There were several items of other business: (i) a question was raised about how to ensure students could complete A level courses when, at 18, the right of abode policy would require them to leave the island in the midst of exam preparation; (ii) there was a perceived disparity in the care of housing between the employing organisations with some people reporting requests for repairs being ignored repeatedly, so perhaps a means to chase them up was needed; (iii) consideration was requested for additional flights at holiday times, and, although previously PCA members had felt there was insufficient demand, the question could be asked again; (iv) concern had been raised about passengers from visiting yachts buying up too much fresh produce so a suggestion was made that councillors could write to shops asking them to consider imposing a limit; (v) clarification was sought about a perceived ban on people taking boats into the water in rough seas, but this was confirmed as incorrect; (vi) a question was raised about the ban on dogs in the Turtle Ponds, and whether the ban was to intended to cover just the ponds or the accompanying barbecue area, so clarification was to be provided and if necessary the sign would be moved to a more fitting position; (vii) the OT/JMC would now likely be 23-25 Mar 2020; (viii) the Director of Resources would be Acting Administrator during the Administrator's imminent leave.

The meeting closed at 1810hrs.

[J Disley](#)

J Disley

Clerk of Council