

**ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT**

Clerk of Council's Office  
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**Formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council**

**1630 on Wednesday 18 Dec 2019 at the Court House**

**MINUTES**

Present: HE Dr Philip Rushbrook, Governor  
Gareth Morris, Acting Administrator  
Allen Cansick, Attorney General

Councillor Katharyn Chadwick  
Councillor Andrew Ellick  
Councillor Andrew Hobson  
Councillor Alan Nicholls

In attendance: Linda Hardiman, Head of Administrator's Office  
Rob Cheeseman, Crown Council  
Jane Disley, Clerk of Council

Apologies:  
HH Steven Chandler, Administrator  
Councillor Kitty George

**1. Welcome**

The Acting Administrator welcomed all parties and explained who was present for those attending by phone.

**2. Approval of minutes**

The minutes of the previous formal meeting on 7 Nov were accepted and could now be published.

**Action:** Clerk to place on noticeboard/on AIG website/in Islander and circulate by email.

**3. Matters arising**

The following matters arising from the actions tracker were addressed:

24 Oct Optician survey: A survey had been prepared and this would be circulated to relevant customers in the new year with a deadline for completion and return. The data would then be compiled and analysed. Rumours that a new optician had been engaged were quashed.

**Action:** Director of Resources to update in due course.

21 Nov Extra flights for school holiday time: Preferred Customer Agreement (PCA) members had been asked to consider additional flights for the long school holiday. In the past members had been reluctant. A reply was expected in the new year.

**Action:** Director of Resources to update in due course.

21 Nov 'Donkey bath' next to hospital: This had been used in the past to catch water from the overflow but it continually needed to be emptied and used to rust. It was no longer in use and so the Operations Directorate had been asked to remove it.

**Action:** Director of Resources to confirm once the bath had been removed.

5 Dec Council committees: Details of the new Council committees had been forwarded to the Governor for approval, which was expected soon. This would be in the form of a legal notice following which details could be published.

**Action:** Crown Counsel/Policy Officer to distribute a notice once formal approval received and publish details in the Islander.

7 Nov Employment 'away day': It was proposed that the third week in January (after the SAA flights and before the FIRS) would be an ideal time for the away day so suggested dates would be circulated to councillors to check their availability.

**Action: Crown Counsel/Policy Officer to circulate suggested dates in the week commencing 20 Jan 2020.**

#### **4. Island Council (Procedure) Rules, 2020**

Item 4 had been withdrawn from the agenda because the AG's Chambers needed more time to review the proposed statutory change. Crown Counsel explained that there was an inconsistency in the wording of two sections that needed to be addressed. Cllr Hobson asked why it was necessary to wait for the statutory aspects to be finalised when the Council could choose to adopt the Rules informally. After some clarification, Council members agreed that the Rules would be accepted and used purely as a guide to good practice while final revisions were undertaken to the statutory version.

**Action: Council to employ the Island Council (Procedure) Rules 2020 as a guide to good practice.**

#### **5. Births & Deaths (Registration) Ordinance, 2020**

Crown Counsel had circulated updated drafts in advance following the discussion at the informal meeting on 5 Dec. All councillors agreed to recommend its adoption to the Governor. Cllr George had provided an email to that effect in advance of the meeting.

The Births and Deaths (Registration) (Forms and Fees) Regulations had also been circulated and were discussed at the 5 Dec informal meeting. Councillors had asked that consideration be given to amending the particulars recorded in the register of births to include the mother's occupation as well as the father's. This work would be picked up in the new year.

**Action: Crown Counsel to report back once the revised Ordinance had been enacted.**

**Crown Counsel to raise with St Helena Government the question of birth records entries.**

#### **6. Any other business**

Several AOB points were raised as follows:

a) Pot holes in Georgetown. Cllr George had provided an email in advance to ask that pot holes in Georgetown near the swimming pool, motor pool and M&E area be addressed.

**Action: Director of Resources to pass the details to the Ops Mgr and ask that these areas be suitably prioritised in their schedule of works.**

b) Finance Committee. The Director of Resources reported that the Finance Committee had met and was making progress on revenue generation, eg revising the Business Levy paid by the employing organisations. The proposed changes would come to Council for discussion in due course.

c) Boat access during ship to shore operations. Cllr Nicholls read a request from several local fishermen to be allowed to access their boats to go fishing while ship operations were in progress. This was discussed and, although there were safety and communications issues to be addressed, the Council felt it was reasonable.

**Action: Director of Resources to pass request to the Ops Mgr/Marine Team Leader/Assistant Harbourmaster for consideration and response.**

d) Wrecked bus. Cllr Nicholls read a request that the wrecked bus (part of the Christmas "Don't Drink and Drive" campaign) be removed because it was an eyesore and created the impression that there was a drink/drive problem on the Island, whereas that particular bus had been in an accident involving visiting contractors. It was accepted that the "Don't Drink and Drive" message was important and so

there was general agreement with the suggestion that the bus be moved to a different location.

**Action:** Director of Resources to convey Council's discussion to the Police Inspector for consideration whether to move the bus.

e) Runway repairs. Concerns were expressed about the disruption and damage likely to be caused once the runway repair contract got underway. It was proposed that by anticipating the possible issues and the likelihood of misinformation it would be helpful to create a unified communications plan to inform the public and help to alleviate potential fears. In order to facilitate accurate information sharing, the suggestion was made that the runway project become a standing agenda item for Council meetings once the contract had begun.

**Action:** Clerk to add this as a standing item at the appropriate time.

f) Pier repairs. The previous discussion about runway repairs moved on to include concerns about the pier repairs, especially with regard to assurances about the quality of the work. Given that several questions were raised it was felt an update from the CSSF Project Mgr would be helpful.

**Action:** Director of Resources to ask CSSF Project Mgr to brief the Council at the next informal meeting.

g) Continuity of food provision. A food security concern was raised about the potential impact if the Seafish Chandlery chose to withdraw from Ascension and it was felt that a contingency plan was needed just in case this decision was ever made. The Director of Resources explained that the AIG's Senior Management Team (SMT) had discussed the food security issue but had not yet created a specific plan. It was agreed that this would be a useful thing to do.

**Action:** Director of Resources to initiate work on a contingency plan in case the Seafish Chandlery should ever choose to withdraw from Ascension Island.

h) Safety of AIG washing machines. In response to a TV programme the night before, concerns were raised about the possible safety of AIG-issued washing machines if they turned out to be the same make and model as reported in the TV programme as subject to a common fault.

**Action:** Director of Resources to ask MEP/Stores Team to check and take appropriate recall/replacement action if necessary.

i) Street lighting. Cllr Ellick noted that there had been no sign of progress in the street lighting trial and asked for an update. The Director of Resources reported that the CSSF Project Mgr had mentioned replacing the poles and using LEDs instead of the existing lights. He suggested that perhaps it was time to request that the Operations Directorate create and share a strategy for meeting future street lighting needs so that people could understand what was being planned.

**Action:** Director of Resources to ask the Ops Mgr to provide an update on the street lighting trial and to ask the CSSF Project Mgr to consider future needs and initiate a strategy to meet them.

## 7. Date of next meetings

The proposed dates for the next three meetings are as follows:

- Informal – Thursday 9 Jan at 1000
- Informal – Thursday 23 Jan at 1630
- Formal – Thursday 6 Feb at 1630

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 1730.

**J Disley**

Jane Disley

Clerk of Council