



## **Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council**

**1700 on Thursday 12 August 2021 at the Courthouse**

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

Present: HH Xander Halliwell, Acting Administrator  
Rob Cheeseman, Crown Counsel [Remotely]  
Gareth Morris, Director of Resources

Councillor Andrew Ellick  
Councillor Alan Nicholls  
Councillor Nicholas John

In attendance: Caitlin Thomas, Clerk to Council

Apologies: Councillor Kitty George  
Councillor Douglas Miller

The Administrator welcomed all parties and thanked everyone for attending. The matters arising were addressed via the actions tracker and current topics discussed were as follows:

- **Animal Welfare [pets]:** It was confirmed that the vet is unable to make it for the August flight; further options are being explored on the flight in September along with additional costing. It was decided that a Public Notice would be put out to assess the demand for a vet coming to the island.
- **Single-use Plastics:** Progress has been postponed due to conflicting priorities; however, the policy officer will provide an update with a timeline ahead of the COP26 meeting.
- **Connection Issues with telecommunications in the Courthouse:** Excavation works will need to be carried out in order for the cable to be installed.
- **Explore the options/measure that may be enforced regarding the dumping of fish waste at the pier head:** This would remain on the tracker until the DoCF returns in August.
- **New location for Resource Library - Tasty Tucker:** With only one response received with concerns over the relocation of the library; these concerns were considered and passed onto the school in order for the relocation to begin.
- **Summary provided to Councillors regarding the CSSF fund:** An update was provided to Council that same day by the Administrator.
- **Road maintenance after the runway project is completed:** The AIG will begin to reach out to discuss further costing processes on replacing the island roadways. It was agreed that this is a topic for the Public Works Committee would lead on.
- **Mountain Infrastructure:** A Business plan has been submitted, however, this will need to be discussed further at the Public Works and Finance Committees.
- **MPA Blue Marine Fund:** An update was received from the DoCF who advised that there has been no development on the MPA Fund since it was last discussed in Council. The DoCF is currently waiting for Blue Marine to come back to them once legal advice has been sought and a proposed Term Sheet and agreement is prepared on how the fund will operate. A call will be scheduled with Blue Marine on 16<sup>th</sup> August to discuss further.
- **Schuyler ferry service to and from the Pierhead:** The ferry times had last been circulated to boat owners by the Operations Directorate. This information will be recirculated.

The Administrator provided an update on the current **COVID-19** status of the island and advised that we have escalated to level 2 ORANGE due to three cases of coronavirus being identified following the arrival of the A400 on Saturday 07 August 2021. Ongoing testing has shown that one individual is now negative but a second test after 48 hours was required to corroborate the result. The Administrator explained that a decision had been made to

extend the original length of compulsory isolation from eight to ten days, to ensure there is no risk of the virus spreading to the community. Councillor Nicholls queried if placing individuals returning from the UK into isolation once they have carried out their pre-arrival tests would reduce the possibility of contracting coronavirus. The Administrator explained that Ascension does not routinely recognise quarantine undertaken in other countries prior to arrival due to there not being a guarantee of compliance. The Administrator went on to explain that almost all new arrivals are fully vaccinated which reduces the risk for people potentially being hospitalised. Testing at the airhead on arrival of passengers will now be standard practice to determine if there is a chance of cross contamination on the flight. This will in turn reduce the need to extend quarantine for others on the flight.

Councillor John highlighted that those testing positive for COVID-19 whilst in isolation should avoid all contact with others. The Administrator explained that if a breach were found then there would be legal recourse possible. It was also suggested that Police checks could be carried out within residential areas whilst people are isolated. The Administrator went on to explain that following the request for emergency medical assistance by a passing vessel, tests had shown the patient was positive for COVID-19. The individual was placed into isolation at the hospital where his symptoms will be closely monitored.

The Administrator gave an update on the **runway project** explaining that the road at the Saints Club junction had now been resurfaced for a more long-term solution by 77 Construction.

Challenges have arisen with the offloading of aggregate due to rough seas putting them behind schedule; a request was made to the Administrators Office for out of hour's work on Sunday 15 August 2021 and Sunday 22 August 2021. The Administrator had agreed to the first request with operating times limited to 0930-1730. The second request was yet to be approved pending an update to operations over the weekend. It was hoped the additional working time would assist the project to maintain its schedule. The east end of the runway continues to be built at pace with proof rolling now 89% complete along with the plate load testing at 45%.

There was one item of **other business**:

- i. **Feedback from Finance Committee:** The next formal Council meeting could potentially see a supplementary request for capital funding.

The meeting closed at 18:35

Caitlin Thomas  
Clerk of Council