



Formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council

16:30 on Thursday 06 July 2023 at the Courthouse

MINUTES

Present: HE Nigel Phillips CBE, Governor [remotely] Councillor Kerry Benjamin
HH Simon Minshull, Administrator Councillor Douglas Miller
Catherine Leo, Acting Director of Resources Councillor Alan Nicholls
Councillor Laura Shearer

In attendance: Jamie Mansbridge, FCDO Head, Falklands & Ascension [remotely]
Carl Mackerras, Head of the Administrator's Office
Matthew James, Crown Counsel
Diane Baum, Director of Conservation and Fisheries
Tiffany Simpson, Marine Team Leader
Adam Sharp, Invertebrate Project Coordinator
Siobhan Stewart, Clerk of Council

Apologies: Catherine Williams, Acting Attorney General
Councillor Kyla Benjamin [overseas]

1. Welcome

HH the Administrator welcomed all parties present and those attending remotely.

2. Approval of Minutes

Decision: The summary of the Informal Council meeting held on 22 May 2023 and published on 02 June 2023 was accepted and in accordance with the Council Rules these were agreed by Council members.

Decision: The minutes of the Formal Council meeting held on 01 June 2023 and published on 23 June 2023 was accepted and in accordance with the Council Rules these were agreed by Council members.

3. Matters arising

There were currently no actions on the actions tracker.

4. Protected Areas

The Director of Conservation and Fisheries explained that at the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15, the global aim of reaching 30% protected areas on both land and sea was agreed. The DoCF explained that currently 19.5% of Ascension's land area is designated within a Protected Area across ten sites. Following a review of the Protected Area network carried out by AIG Conservation, additional Protected Areas were recommended to address the gaps in the current network such as the lack of protected areas dedicated to Ascension's endemic invertebrates or plants. Three new Nature Reserves were proposed alongside expansions to the existing Letterbox and North East Bay Nature Reserves to include sites where endemic invertebrates, plants, and nesting seabirds are located. If these proposals are accepted, then 27% of Ascension's land area would be within Protected Areas. The DoCF explained that whilst some concerns were raised in relation to conflicting land use during the consultation, these have largely been addressed to the satisfaction of the relevant stakeholders.

	Proposal	KB	DM	AN	LS
1	To formally recommend that the policy on the expansion of the national protected areas networks be recommended for adoption.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Administrator invited Councillors to formally recommend that the policy on the expansion of the national protected areas networks be recommended for adoption. The Administrator explained that all four Councillors present have voted in favour of adopting the above, HE the Governor thanked Councillors for their advice and noted their recommendation.

	Proposal	KB	DM	AN	LS
2	To formally recommend that the management plans for the existing protected areas be recommended for adoption.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Administrator invited Councillors to formally recommend that the management plans for the existing protected areas be recommended for adoption. The Administrator explained that all four Councillors present have voted in favour of adopting the above, HE the Governor thanked Councillors for their advice and noted their recommendation.

HE the Governor confirmed that Councillors recommendation is accepted in principle, pending final confirmation from a key stakeholder.

HE the Governor and HH the Administrator thanked Dr Diane Baum, Director of Conservation and Fisheries for her hard work and dedication over her years of working on Ascension Island, ensuring that decisions are made with consideration to nature at all times.

5. Extending the Financials Services Ordinance

Crown Counsel explained that the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FRSA) is the regulatory authority for Financial Services in Ascension. In 2019, changes to the Financial Services Ordinance, 2008 were made in St Helena to allow the FSRA to waive some of the licensing provisions that deterred overseas insurers from offering insurance cover for risks in St Helena, Crown Counsel confirmed that several of these waivers have been granted to overseas insurers in recent years. Crown Counsel explained that one of the overseas insurers that has a St Helena waiver now intends to provide cover for a risk on Ascension related to the runway renovation works, and have therefore requested the FSRA for the same type of waiver as has been provided for the St Helena risks. However, the FSRA does not any power to issue a waiver for Ascension, because of the way that the 2019 amendment Ordinance was implemented. As a result, a Legal Order is now required to be passed so that insurance may be provided for the runway renovations works in Ascension.

	Proposal	KylaB	KerryB	AN	LS
3	To formally recommend the adoption of the St Helena Law (Financial Services Ordinance)(Application) Order, 2023.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Administrator invited Councillors to formally recommend the adoption of the St Helena Law (Financial Services Ordinance)(Application) order, 2023. The Administrator explained that all four Councillors present have voted in favour of the above, HE the Governor thanked Councillors for their advice and accepted their recommendation.

6. Runway Project Update

The HoAO gave an update on the runway project reporting that the demobilisation ship is expected next week, with backloading forecast to last for around three weeks, pending sea conditions. Following the completion of backloading the remaining runway personnel will begin to depart Ascension, with the final personnel departing at the end of July 2023.

7. Any other business

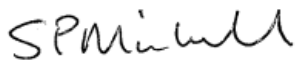
There were two items of **other business**:

- i. **Roadside Clearance Works:** Councillors Miller noted the excellent work the AIG Plant team were doing in clearing the roadside along the NASA Straight Road of greenery, providing a safer place for walkers and cyclists.
- ii. **FCDO/MOD Officials visit:** HE the Governor relayed his apologies on behalf of Acting Director Overseas Territories (FCDO), Adam Pile, for being unable to travel to Ascension as planned at the beginning of July 2023 due to weather related issues in the Falklands. The Administrator confirmed that efforts are being made for a rescheduled visit to take place in August 2023.

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 16:50

Siobhan Stewart
Clerk of Council

I certify that this is a true record of the meeting to which it relates.



Simon Minshall

On behalf of HE the Governor, Mr Nigel Phillips CBE