



**Formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council**  
**16:30 on Tuesday 28 November 2023 at the Courthouse**

**MINUTES**

Present:	HE Nigel Phillips, Governor HH Simon Minshull, Administrator David Ballantyne, Attorney General Catherine Leo, Acting Director of Resources	[remotely]  [remotely]	Councillor Kyla Benjamin Councillor Douglas Miller Councillor Alan Nicholls
In attendance:	Matthew James, Crown Counsel Carl Mackerras, Head of the Administrator's Office Ailsa Hearne, FCDO Desk Officer Denise John, Acting Clerk of Council	[Remotely]	
Apologies:	Councillor Kerry Benjamin Councillor Laura Shearer	[Overseas]	

**1. Welcome**

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

**2. Joint Declaration of Government of the United Kingdom & British Overseas Territories**

The Administrator explained that during the Joint Ministerial Council held in November 2023 agreement on a final draft of a joint declaration of Government of the United Kingdom and British Overseas Territories was reached. It was subsequently agreed that the text would be circulated to each Overseas Territory Government for consideration and ratification by a set deadline.

HE the Governor thanked Councillors Shearer and Kyla Benjamin for their contribution to the forming of the declaration during discussions at the Joint Ministerial Council. HE the Governor noted the inclusive approach taken by Minister David Rutley, ensuring that this first step sets the groundwork for future collaborative working. HE the Governor described the declaration as a positive development, highlighting a key evolutionary stage in the UK and UK Overseas Territories relationship. HE the Governor further explained that the declaration is a high-level overarching agreement, setting out key principles to guide and steer the UK Cross Government strategy, which will be shared with leaders and representatives in due course.

The only feedback comment on the text thus far has been from the Government of St Helena who have requested that the UN charter be referenced as a footnote.

The Attorney General offered his support to the text, in the hope that the ambitions of the UK and the community of Ascension align. Potential for further interactions between Ascension Island and other Overseas Territories was welcomed.

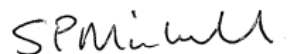
	Proposal	KylaB	DM	AN
1	Ratification of the text within the Joint Declaration of Government of the United Kingdom & British Overseas Territories	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Administrator invited Councillors for formally ratify the text of the Joint Ministerial Council Declaration on behalf of Ascension Island. All Councillors voted in favour of ratification of the text. HE the Governor thanked Councillors for advice and agreed to relay their recommendation to London.

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 16:40

Siobhan Stewart  
Clerk of Council

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Minshall'.

*Simon Minshall*

*On behalf of HE the Governor, Mr Nigel Phillips CBE*