



Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council

15:00 on Thursday 09 October 2025 at the Courthouse

MEETING SUMMARY

Present: HH Simon Minshull, Administrator
Director of Resources, Peter Thomas
Crown Counsel, James Twigg [remotely]

Councillor Michael Ellick
Councillor Alan Nicholls
Councillor Thomas Barnes

In attendance: Head of the Administrator's Office, Martin Hogg
Policy and Comms Officer, Stephanie Sherrin
Acting Crown Counsel, Daniel Weight
Clerk to Council, Georgina Wilson

Apologies: Councillor Ethan Bally
Councillor Eugene Bennett
Councillor Thomas Hickling
Councillor Laura Shearer

1. Welcome

The Administrator Simon Minshull welcomed all parties and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Approval of Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Formal Council meeting held of 11 September 2025 and published 06 October 2025 were accepted, and in accordance with the Council Rules, were agreed by Council members.

3. Matters Arising

No new matters arising, Council to be updated on current entries at regular intervals.

4. Proposed amendments to the Child Welfare Ordinance 2011, & Marriage Ordinance 2011.

Crown Counsel James Twigg introduced the proposed amendments to the Child Welfare Ordinance 2011. Proposed amendment to Ascension's Child Welfare Ordinance in relation to a child's father acquiring parental responsibility bringing the Ordinance in line with the Welfare of Children Ordinance (St Helena). The Administrator asked what would happen in the case surrogacy cases. Crown Counsel advised that the surrogate could get a parental order through the courts or go through the process of adoption.

The proposed amendment to the Marriage Ordinance 2011 to raise the minimum age for marriage from 16 to 18, and remove the need for parental consent. No objections were raised by councillors to the proposed amendments.

5. Public Holidays 2026

The Administrator asked councillors to consider the list of proposed public holidays for 2026. Council members were asked to consider moving the Ascension Day from Thursday 14 May to Friday 15 May, and for the King's Birthday to be observed on Friday 13 November, the latter in line with St Helena. No concerns were raised by councillors and it was agreed this will be subject to a vote at the next formal meeting.

6. Pierhead Valuation

The Director of Resources Peter Thomas advised that for AIG to comply with an outstanding audit recommendation, a valuation of the pierhead is required. The cost of a professional valuation by a competent UK company will be £13,150. The pierhead should then not need to be re-valued unless there is significant damage incurred to the structure. Councillors asked for clarification on the basis of the quote provided, and why the cost was so high. The DoR advised that this technical assessment considers the construction costs of the pierhead, material used and the structure itself. The DoR advised that costs have been lowered as there is no need for an onsite assessment of the pierhead, and the valuation will be compiled remotely using images and information provided by AIG. Councillor Nicholls asked for clarification on how this cost would be funded. The DoR advised that this would be funded from the Consolidated fund by raising a Supplementary Appropriation Ordinance.

7. Any other business

There were four items of **other business**.

1) **Youth Trainee Scheme Safeguarding Policy:**

The Administrator explained that AIG is working on an Island-wide youth trainee scheme safeguarding policy to set minimum standards for employing organisations to follow. The aim of the policy is to ensure the structure for safeguarding is in place, including minimum standards of safeguarding training, and the reporting procedures for safeguarding concerns. The policy is in draft form and AIG expects to introduce to councillors for comment ahead of presenting it for approval at the next formal meeting.

2) **AIMPACT Fund:**

Councillor Nicholls asked for greater public transparency on the list of recipients of AIMPACT funds to show which projects the money is being awarded to. Martin Hogg, Head of the Administrators Office, advised that bidders awarded funds are required to issue public communications and notices upon project completion, such as an article in the Islander. Councillor Nicholls asked if the AIMPACT process is audited. Martin Hogg advised that fund recipients are required to provide receipts and updates on project progress. And where funds were not all spent, they are returned for allocation to other projects. The Director of Resources clarified that AIMPACT Funding is a community fund and not an AIG administered fund.

3) **Accommodation Concerns:**

Councillor Barnes raised concerns of the accommodation situation on Travellers. There are concerns that the accommodation provided does not meet a suitable minimum standard and asked if AIG would look at introducing legislation that could safeguard employees. The Administrator asked Councillor Barnes to complete a Councillor Enquiry Form to allow AIG to look into his concern and suggested the Councillor also refer to the Employment Ordinance. The Administrator commented that AIG are working with Mitie and DIO on the provision of housing in Two Boats and Georgetown, and that AIG will continue to offer support where possible.

4) **Driving Licence Categories:**

Councillor Ellick raised a question regarding the categories of road licences for driving difference sized vehicles, following concerns raised by constituents. The Director of Resources undertook to review the Councillor's concern.

10. **Proposed date of next meeting**

- Formal Meeting 16:30 on Wednesday 29 October 2025
- Informal Meeting 15:00 Thursday 20 November 2025

The Administrator thanked all the councillors and the meeting closed at 15:49

Georgina Wilson
Clerk to Council