



Formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council
16:30 on Wednesday 29 October 2025 at the Courthouse

MINUTES

Present:	HE Nigel Phillips CBE, Governor [remotely] HH Simon Minshull, Administrator Andrew Duncan, Attorney General [remotely] Peter Thomas, Director of Resources	Councillor Thomas Barnes Councillor Eugene Bennett Councillor Michael Ellick Councillor Laura Shearer Councillor Alan Nicholls
In attendance:	Martin Hogg, Head of Administrator's Office Stephanie Sherrin, Policy and Comms Officer [Agenda item 4 only] James Twigg, Crown Counsel Chrystele Todd, FCDO Desk Officer [remotely] Georgina Wilson, Clerk of Council	
Apologies:	Councillor Ethan Bally Councillor Thomas Hickling	

1. Welcome

HH the Administrator Simon Minshull welcomed all parties present and introduced those attending remotely, including the new Attorney General, Andrew Duncan based in St Helena.

2. Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to approve.

3. Matters arising

The Administrator explained that there were no substantive updates to the items on the actions tracker, food security and telecoms, but that the Ascension Island Government (AIG) would update councillors, as required.

4. Youth Trainee Island Wide Safeguarding Policy

Stephanie Sherrin (SS), Policy and Comms officer explained that a review of the island-wide Youth Traineeship framework has been commissioned by the Social Worker and the Ascension Island Safeguarding and Children's Board. This led to the development of a Youth Traineeship Scheme Safeguarding Policy which will set a mandatory code of conduct for employees and youth trainees, mandatory CPD accredited safeguarding awareness training for all employees coming into contact with youth trainees, one - to - one supervision on a risk assessed basis, and a clear safeguarding reporting procedure. SS explained that all employing organisations that accept youth trainees are supportive of the policy and have been involved in the development of the policy. The policy will allow for a good standard of safeguarding in all employing organisations on Island. The Administrator added that AIG have created their own internal policy to safeguard youth trainees, and the proposed policy largely mirrors the AIG policy. It was noted that Employing Organisations have a grace period of three months to ensure that the safeguarding training that they provide to staff is CPD certified.

Each councillor was asked in turn if they were happy to recommend the introduction of the Youth Trainee Island Wide Safeguarding Policy to the Governor?

	Proposal	Cllr Barnes	Cllr Bennett	Cllr Ellick	Cllr Nicholls	Cllr Shearer
1	To recommend the introduction of the Youth Trainee Island Wide Safeguarding Policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

HE the Governor acknowledged the councillors' recommendation and accepted, thanking councillors for their advice.

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

James Twigg, Crown Counsel, explained that as it currently stands, if a child born is on Ascension Island to unmarried parents, the father would only acquire parental responsibility by marrying the mother. There is a difference in the law on St Helena and the UK, therefore it is proposed that the amendment would grant father parental responsibility from the point that his name is entered on the birth certificate. This proposed change reflects modern times and the realities of life on Ascension. No questions were raised on the Child Welfare Ordinance. Crown Counsel explained the proposed amendments to the Marriage Ordinance 2011. As it currently stands, individuals on Ascension Island aged 16 or 17 could marry if they have parental consent. This approach has already ended in England and Wales and other territories, so the proposal in respect to marriage is to eliminate the ability of people to get married before they are 18. This is another step to bring this legislation in line with modern practices. No questions were raised by councillors. Attorney General Andrew Duncan questioned the lack of transition arrangements in the drafted amendment. It was agreed that this small amendment would be reviewed by the Legislative Commissioner.

Each councillor was asked in turn if they were happy to recommend the proposed changes to the Child Welfare Ordinance 2011, and the Marriage Ordinance 2011 to the Governor?

	Proposal	Cllr Barnes	Cllr Bennett	Cllr Ellick	Cllr Nicholls	Cllr Shearer
2	To recommend the proposed changes to the Child Welfare Ordinance 2011, and the Marriage Ordinance 2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

HE the Governor acknowledged the councillors' recommendation and accepted, noting the Attorney Generals comment, and thanking councillors for their advice.

6. Pierhead Valuation

Peter Thomas, Director of Resources, explained to councillors that AIG is requesting that the Supplementary Appropriation Ordinance be raised so that money may be distributed from the consolidated fund in order to meet the expenditure of a professional evaluation of the pierhead. The quotation is £13,150. This spend is required to meet audit compliance and addresses an ongoing case qualification to the financial statements. Councillor Nicholls asked when the valuation would take place. The DoR explained that there was no immediate requirement, but the aim is to tie in the valuation with the 2024-2025 financial accounts, so AIG would look to complete this before March 2026. Councillor Nicholls asked if this valuation would need to take place on an annual basis. The DoR confirmed that the revaluation would only take place if there was significant structural damage to the pierhead. Councillor Shearer raised a question on the impact of resurfacing of the top of the pierhead and the impact on the revaluation. The DoR explained AIG would be able to demonstrate the cost of general resurfacing works so this work would not require further independent valuation. Councillor Bennett asked for clarity on purpose and benefits of carrying out a valuation. The DoR explained that the valuation is required for audit regulation compliance, which requires a professional independent review. The DoR added that the valuation would be completed remotely, using images, photos and information provided by AIG. The valuers would provide professional drawings, designs and calculations for the Auditor to accept the justification to the valuation. Councillor Nicholls asked for clarity on the method of valuation. The DoR confirmed that it would be based on depreciated replacement value rather than market value.

Each councillor was asked in turn if they were happy to recommend the processing of a supplementary ordinance for the sum of £13,150 to the Governor?

	Proposal	Cllr Barnes	Cllr Bennett	Cllr Ellick	Cllr Nicholls	Cllr Shearer
3	To recommend the processing of a supplementary ordinance for the sum of £13,150	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

HE the Governor acknowledged the councillors' recommendation and accepted, thanking councillors for their advice. The Governor recognised the hard work by the Director of Resources and the Finance team in meeting audit requirements.

7. Public Holidays 2026

The Administrator provided a brief update and background to the declaring of Public Holidays on Ascension Island. Ascension Day falls on Thursday 14 May and the Administrator proposed that councillors may want to consider directing that the Ascension Day Public Holiday be observed on Friday 15 May. Councillors were also asked to consider observing the occasion of the birthday of His Majesty King Charles III on Friday 13 November as a Public Holiday in line with St Helena. In addition, councillors were asked to consider observing the Boxing Day Public Holiday on Monday 28 December (in lieu of Saturday 26 December) as directed by HE the Governor Nigel Phillips CBE.

Each councillor was asked in turn if they were happy to recommend observing Ascension Day on Friday 15 May instead of Thursday 14 May, and observe Boxing Day on Monday 28 December in lieu of Saturday 26 December to the Governor?

	Proposal	Cllr Barnes	Cllr Bennett	Cllr Ellick	Cllr Nicholls	Cllr Shearer
4	To recommend observing Ascension Day on Friday 15 May instead of Thursday 14 May, and observe Boxing Day on Monday 28 December in lieu of Saturday 26 December	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

HE the Governor acknowledged the councillors' recommendation and accepted, thanking councillors for their advice.

8. Any other business

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

- i. **ICCAT Clarification:** The following statement was provided by the Conservation and Fisheries Department "The following statement is to clarify the ICCAT recommendations regarding sailfish MLS discussed at the formal council meeting on 11 September 2025: The Department for Conservation and Fisheries would like to confirm the recommendation from ICCAT follows what is included in their fisheries measures which is that all contracting parties will take active measures to limit the mortality of sailfish. Suggestions toward this outcome include setting size limits, limiting days at sea, fishing equipment regulations, or instituting no-take regulations. ICCAT do acknowledge that there currently isn't any obligation to apply a restriction but that conservation of the species is needed. Given the above the AIG Department for Conservation and Fisheries thought instituting a size limit regulation would be the least restrictive option. The AIG Conservation and Fisheries Directorate decided on the 160cm LJFL minimum size based on several sources

of information. The 160cm minimum size was supported by ICCAT and CEFAS members.”

- ii. **AIMPACT Round three:** Councillor Barnes asked when the AIMPACT fund would be opening again for bids. The Head of the Administrators Office, Martin Hogg (MH) confirmed that the notice to advertise round three would be issued by the end of the week. MH confirmed that he had received confirmation of the available funds from Blue Marine Foundation.
- iii. **Employment Ordinance:** Councillor Shearer asked for a further update regarding employment law and specifically the case for introducing a minimum wage on Ascension Island following a response received from AIG to a Councillor Enquiry Form she had submitted. The Administrator confirmed that AIG was in discussion and advising some employing organisations on the interpretation and requirements of the Employment Ordinance 2022. The Governor advised that the issue highlighted by Councillor Shearer would need to be researched and reviewed by Crown Counsel before being brought to council for further discussion.
- iv. **Telecoms Update:** Councillor Shearer asked if there was any update regarding telecoms. The Governor advised that AIG was working with stakeholders and SURE and discussions were ongoing. The Governor advised that work was being undertaken at pace, and that AIG would discuss with councillors when there was substantive information to share.
- v. **Bonfire Night:** Councillor Bennett raised a question regarding the cancelled Bonfire night. It was advised that it had been cancelled due to lack of fire cover. *Note: After the meeting, MITIE were able to provide fire cover, and the event was reinstated and to take place on the 5th November 2025.
- vi. **Portaloos at Motorcross Site:** Councillor Bennett asked if portable toilet facilities at the Motorcross site could be emptied to allow for community use. The councillor noted that similar facilities at Devil’s Ashpit were emptied by AIG, but the Motorcross portable toilets were currently not. Councillor Bennett offered to submit a Councillor Enquiry Form and the Administrator asked Councillor Bennett to do so.
- vii. **Remembrance Wreath:** Councillor Barnes confirmed that he would lay the wreath on behalf of the Council at the Service of Remembrance on Sunday 9 November 2025.

HE the Governor expressed his deepest gratitude and thanks to The Administrator Simon Minshull for his contribution to the governance of Ascension Island over the past three years.

9. Proposed dates of next meetings:

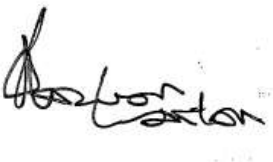
Informal Council meeting – 15:00 Thursday 20 November 2025

Formal Council meeting – 16:30 Thursday 04 December 2025

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 17:07

Georgina Wilson
Clerk of Council

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



Rowan Laxton

On behalf of HE the Governor, Mr Nigel Phillips CBE