

**ASCENSION ISLAND  
GOVERNMENT**

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

**15:00 on Thursday 26 February 2026 at the Courthouse**

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

Present: HH Rowan Laxton, Administrator  
Acting Director of Resources (DoR), Catherine Jones  
Crown Counsel (CC), James Twigg

Councillor Ethan Bally  
Councillor Thomas Barnes  
Councillor Eugene Bennett  
Councillor Michael Ellick  
Councillor Thomas Hickling  
Councillor Alan Nicholls  
Councillor Laura Shearer

In attendance: Head of Administrator's Office, Martin Hogg  
Director of Operations and Facilities (DoOF), Nathan Millington  
Clerk to Council, Georgina Wilson

#### **1. Welcome**

The Administrator HH Rowan Laxton welcomed all parties and thanked everyone for attending.

#### **Minutes of last Formal Meeting**

The minutes of the Formal Council meeting held on 29 January 2026 were accepted and agreed.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

Matters arising through the Action Tracker.

- **Food Security.** The Administrator advised that following a Green Overseas-funded report on Food Security from K-ORA, a further visit would take place in March 2026. It was noted that the Ascension Island Government (AIG) hydroponics is an area for new development to improve food supply and talks would continue between the AIG and United States Space Force to encourage collaboration between the stakeholders. The Administrator expressed his desire to implement some of the recommendations and shared the report with councillors. The Administrator also confirmed that two expressions of interest had been received to take over the Georgetown mini-mart premises.

#### **4. Telecoms Update**

Nathan Millington, Director of Operations and Facilities (DoOF), provided an update on the telecoms project. The DoOF advised that a soft launch of the Ascension Island Mobile (AIM) network took place on Thursday 19 February. It was noted that since the soft launch 469 Sim cards had been issued, including 365 residential users and 104 business users. There had been some technical issues identified during the soft launch, including difficulty accessing the voice network, but 99% of customers now had access to 4G data. It was noted that the AIM are working to resolve these issues as soon as possible.

It was identified that there are issues due to the carrier settings on devices owned, or phones not being compatible with the new network but this is outside of the scope of AIM. The DoOF explained that AIM were working hard to ensure landline phone provisions would be rolled out as quickly as possible to those who had requested this service. Councillor Nicholls inquired if the 999 emergency service was functioning fully to which the DoOF confirmed there

are no concerns and that 999 services could be reached on both Sure and AIM devices. Councillor Nicholls then questioned SURE's departure strategy to which the Administrator advised that Sure have not provided an exit plan, but AIG had reminded Sure of their obligations.

Councillor Shearer questioned where customers can receive additional help with their devices and network issues. The DoOF explained that the first point of contact is the Post Office, where AIM services will also be sold. The Administrator gave thanks to the hard-working Post-Office staff for providing this service. Councillor Bennett asked what support AIM would have once Omnitouch departed Ascension. The DoOF explained that most issues will be dealt with in-house until a more permanent solution is confirmed. Councillor Bennett queried about affordable packages for families to which it was confirmed that AIM plan to introduce an Under 16's package. Councillor Ellick noted that the price of packages may be difficult to afford for larger families, however it was agreed that AIM packages provide better value for money than previous Sure packages. Councillor Bally asked if AIM would consider a pay as you go option moving forward, expressing his concern that some members of the community simply want minutes and texts. The DoOF explained that AIM's plans were to monitor the usage of data across the next few months, potentially adjusting rates based on usage patterns.

It was confirmed that AIM was incorporated in January with the Company Directors noted as Catherine Jones and Nathan Millington and Company Secretary James Twigg. The AIM is registered in St Helena and has a telecommunications licence issued by Governor Phillips. Councillor Shearer questioned if the radio network was in full operation which the DoOF confirmed as functioning under the AIG. Councillor Shearer also inquired about SIMs for satellite phones. It was confirmed that AIG were working to resolve this outstanding issue. The Administrator thanked the DoOF.

## **5. Forward Look for Council Agenda**

The Administrator introduced a plan to identify key areas of legislation and policy that needed to be reviewed and prioritised over the coming months. Discussions by councillors identified a range of areas requiring review, including the Employment Ordinance, Drone Policy, Public Health, and business on island. Concerns over sheep, and potential changes to tax brackets were also raised. Councillors agreed that moving forward they would meet at the beginning of each year to discuss upcoming legislative changes. Councillors asked for an update on the Wildlife Protection Ordinance which was approved in September 2025. Crown Counsel confirmed it was going through the legislative process. A draft Forward Look of the areas identified would be circulated to councillors in the coming weeks.

## **6. AOB**

### **6.1 AIG Income Generation**

A discussion was held on the possible ways AIG could increase income generation. It was suggested that selling basic car parts at the AIG fuel station could generate income. Catherine Jones, Acting Director of Resources (DoR), reminded councillors that AIG Stores stocked parts for the public to purchase and noted that currently it was not possible to have a shop at the fuel station, detailing that the premises would require additional infrastructure work to make it secure to house stock.

### **6.2 Review of Business Permits**

Councillor Bennett, echoed by Councillor Ellick, raised concerns over some businesses selling items that were not agreed under their business permit. The DoR agreed to review business permits.

The Administrator thanked the councillors for their support in the telecoms project, also recognising the hard work from Omnitouch and the AIG team in the delivery of the new network. Councillors echoed their thanks to everyone involved in this complex operation, recognising that the whole community are now benefitting from the new network.

Next Formal Meeting 12 March 2026

The Administrator thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 17:05

Georgina Wilson  
Clerk to Council