

**ASCENSION ISLAND  
GOVERNMENT**

Clerk of Council's Office  
Ascension Island  
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## **Informal meeting Summary of the Ascension Island Council**

**15:00 on Thursday 14 May 2026 at the Courthouse**

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

Present: HH Rowan Laxton, Administrator  
Crown Counsel (CC), James Twigg (Remotely)

Councillor Ethan Bally  
Councillor Thomas Barnes  
Councillor Eugene Bennett  
Councillor Alan Nicholls  
Councillor Laura Shearer

In attendance: Policy and Comms Officer, Stephanie Sherrin  
Director of Conservation, Dr Tiffany Simpson  
Clerk to Council, Georgina Wilson

Apologies: Acting Director of Resources (DoR), Catherine Jones  
Councillor Michael Ellick

#### **1. Welcome**

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

#### **2. Minutes of last Formal Meeting**

The minutes of the Formal Council meeting held on 23 April 2026 have been published and circulated in accordance with Council rules.

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

Matters arising through the Action Tracker were discussed, with Councillors updated on the progress of proposed changes to the Employment Ordinance 2022. Councillors were also provided an update on local telecommunications, advised that a mobile network outage on Wednesday 13 May was quickly resolved and reassured that progress was being made on roaming agreements and international calling.

#### **4. Hantavirus**

Following several informal Council meetings and the publication of recent public notices on the Hantavirus situation, Councillors were briefed on the latest developments. It was advised that the Titan flight to repatriate staff deemed to be 'At Risk' was scheduled to land on St Helena on Saturday 16 May before departing for Ascension Island on 17 May and then onwards to the UK. Councillors were also advised that a separate medical flight was due to depart Ascension on Friday 15 May to take a 'high risk' individual with potential symptoms to the UK for precautionary treatment.

#### **5. Single Use Vapes**

James Twigg, Crown Counsel (CC), advised Councillors of a proposed ban on Single Use Vapes (originally agreed by council in March 2025) and proposed the introduction of age limits for these types of products. Councillors discussed how to control the import of these products, agreeing that further engagement with shipping organisations would be required.

It was agreed that age restrictions were a much-needed requirement for purchasing vape products and the Council confirmed this amendment should be implemented at the same time as introducing a ban on single-use vape imports. It was agreed that the current Control of Tobacco Ordinance 2013 would be amended to include vape products and Council would vote on these proposed changes at the next formal meeting.

## **6. AOB**

### **6.1 Chandlery**

Councillor Bally questioned if there was any update on the Chandlery's planned exit and potential replacement provider. The Administrator confirmed that talks were taking place with potential bidders, and the takeover of stock and staff were included in the discussions.

### **6.2 Fuel Station**

Councillor Bennett asked about the possibility of opening a small store at the fuel station which could offer a selection of widely used car parts and provide an option to order tyres and other specialised car parts. He asked again if this could be reconsidered and fully costed to see if it is a viable option. The Administrator agreed that Ken Jones, the new Director of Resources could look into this and would bring his analysis back to Council.

### **6.3 Two Boats Lodge**

Councillor Bennett enquired if Two Boats Lodge could be repurposed to provide small, self-catered units to help alleviate the pressure for accommodation for transit passengers and provide revenue for AIG. Councillor Bally echoed this suggestion raised by Councillor Bennett. The Administrator advised that this would be looked at as part of a wider review of the Ascension Island Governments (AIG)s estate.

### **6.4 Starlink**

Councillor Bennett enquired if the AIG were continuing to pursue SpaceX to provide cheaper residential packages for island users. The Administrator confirmed that AIG was in discussion with SpaceX with a view to their recognising Ascension in its own right (rather than through roaming packages) and with correspondingly higher prioritisation. The Administrator undertook to provide the Council with an update when there was more information to share.

### **6.5 Satellite Telephones**

Councillor Shearer requested an update on the availability of satellite telephone SIM cards, highlighting the importance of resolving the international dialling availability of Ascension Island Mobile. Crown Counsel advised that work was underway, and Stephanie Sherrin advised that they were in the process of being procured.

It was acknowledged that this was Stephanie Sherrin's last council meeting. The Administrator thanked Stephanie for her hard work and contributions to the Island and the community and noted that she would be missed. Stephanie thanked the Administrator for his kind words and for the opportunity to work on Ascension. She also commended Councillors for their commitment to the community.

Next Formal Meeting 18 June 2026

The Administrator thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 16:00.

Georgina Wilson  
Clerk to Council