

**ASCENSION ISLAND  
GOVERNMENT**

Clerk of Council's Office  
Ascension Island  
South Atlantic Ocean  
ASCN 1ZZ



[siobhan.stewart@ascension.gov.ac](mailto:siobhan.stewart@ascension.gov.ac)

+ (247) 67000 ext. 1100

[www.ascension.gov.ac](http://www.ascension.gov.ac)

**Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council**

**10:00 on Thursday 26 September 2024 at the Court House**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

Present: HH Simon Minshull, Administrator  
Director of Resources, Peter Thomas

Councillor Kerry Benjamin  
Councillor Kyla Benjamin  
Councillor Alan Nicholls  
Councillor Laura Shearer  
Councillor Gordon Worthington

In attendance: Carl Mackerras, Head of Administrator's Office  
Matthew James, Crown Counsel  
Siobhan Stewart, Clerk to Council

Apologies:

**1. Welcome**

The Administrator welcomed all parties and thanked everyone for attending.

**2. Matters arising**

Matters arising were addressed via the actions tracker as follows:

**Pets on the FIRS:** The Administrator explained that no decision has been made as to whether pets only belonging to MOD Military Personnel and MOD Civil Servants will be carried on the FIRS. Discussions remain ongoing with both British Forces South Atlantic Islands [BFSAI] and Defence Supply Chain Operations and Movements [DSCOM].

**Future Vet Visit Plans:** The Administrator confirmed that a bid to support costs associated with bringing a veterinarian to Ascension has been submitted to the Ascension Island Marine Protected Area Community Trust (AIMPACT) fund. The HoAO confirmed that the AIMPACT Project Advisory Group will be meeting later the same day to consider all bids submitted.

**3. SSA Radio Contract**

The Administrator provided an overview of the Emergency Radio Service Sure South Atlantic [SSA] provide on Ascension. Crown Counsel explained that the Emergency Radio Service in Ascension is formed of two repeater sites, as well as four base stations. The equipment at these stations are owned by the AIG, having been installed and maintained by SSA. Following the contract expiry for SSA to maintain the Emergency Radio System in Ascension, renewal of this contract is now required. The Administrator explained that following the approval of the MoU between SSA in August 2024 an agreement has since been signed for SSA to continue maintenance of the Emergency Radio maintenance Service for two more years.

**4. Supplementary expenditure estimate – Financial Year 2024-2025**

The Director of Resources (DoR) explained that following eligible Councillors recommendation for a Supplementary Appropriation for both a subsidy payment to SSA and a revision of costs for the AIG IT support contract, AIG have since identified the need for additional spend in relation to IT development that will require an additional Supplementary Appropriation. The DoR explained that the AIG have identified a need for an AIG internal IT

Development Project Board. To support with the effective functioning of this board an IT Development Project – Administrative Assistance is required for an initial period of three months.

Councillor Shearer asked whether a Supplementary Appropriation was being drafted now for both the Radio Contract and for the recruitment of an IT Development Project – Administrative Assistance. The DoR explained that the intended approach going forward is to advise Councillors of estimated costs forecast to be incurred on this project, with costs then consolidated into one Supplementary Appropriation at a later date.

Councillor Nicholls requested further information regarding the cost increase of the AIG IT support contract. The DoR explained that the cost was captured in the MoU and subsequent Supplementary Appropriation. Discussion was had regarding the composition of the IT Development Project Board.

Councillor Kerry Benjamin requested clarity as to why a temporary position was being advertised as coming with single accommodation. The DoR explained that by advertising the position with accommodation included it means both single status and house hold status persons would be eligible to apply. Crown Counsel added that it also means that persons currently residing overseas would be eligible to apply. The Administrator confirmed that within the three-month period an assessment of the ongoing need for the position will be made. Councillor Shearer asked whether the role will be able to assist the community with Starlink queries. The Administrator confirmed that the position is an internal AIG position, adding that customers should contact Starlink directly should they be experiencing issues.

The Administrator confirmed that no decision is being sought at this time, noting that the memorandum provided to Councillors is to provide estimated additional expenditure for inclusion within a future Supplementary Ordinance request.

## 6. Any other business

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

- i. **Green Overseas (GO) conference on Climate Finance:** The DoR informed Councillors that he will be attending the Green Overseas (GO) conference on Climate Finance in Belgium from 06 to 10 October 2024. The DoR invited Councillors to highlight any issues they wish him to raise at this conference.
- ii. **Joint Ministerial Council:** The Administrator thanked Councillors Kerry Benjamin and Alan Nicholls for agreeing to represent Ascension Island at this years Joint Ministerial Council in London in November 2024. The Administrator informed Councillors that the Head of the Administrators Office [HoAO] will provide the necessary briefing packs and HE the Governor, Nigel Phillips, CBE looks forward to seeing elected members there.
- iii. **Youth Trainee:** The Administrator informed Councillors that from 07-11 October 2024 the Administrator's Office will have a Youth Trainee joining the team. Councillors looked forward to welcoming the Youth Trainee to the next formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council due to be held on Wednesday 09 October 2024.
- iv. **New HoAO:** The HoAO informed Councillors that his successor will be visiting Ascension from 07-11 October 2024 on a familiarisation trip.

The next formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council will be held on Wednesday 09 October 2024.

The meeting closed at 10:20.

Siobhan Stewart  
Clerk to Council