

**ASCENSION ISLAND
GOVERNMENT**

Clerk of Council's Office
Ascension Island
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Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council

10:00 on Wednesday 06 November 2024 at the Court House

MEETING SUMMARY

Present: HH Carl Mackerras, Acting Administrator
Director of Resources, Peter Thomas

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

In attendance: Siobhan Stewart, Clerk to Council

Apologies: HH Simon Minshull, Administrator
Matthew James, Crown Counsel

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 AIG has now received confirmation from Defence Supply Chain Operations and Movements [DSCOM] that Military Personnel and MOD Civil Staff are entitled to apply for the movement of pets on the Falkland Islands Resupply Ship [FIRS]. Any applications outside of these criteria will be treated as exceptions and considered on their merits and prioritised accordingly. Kuehne & Nagel have also confirmed that they are accepting pets from civilians on the understanding that Military Personnel and entitled MOD Civilian Staff owned pets will take precedence. AIG will seek confirmation on this policy from British Forces South Atlantic Islands [BFSAI] and the RAF Commander of the Ascension Island Base [CAIB] before issuing a public notice.

Future Vet Visit Plans: The Administrator confirmed that a bid to support costs associated with bringing a veterinarian to Ascension has been approved by the Ascension Island Marine Protected Area Community Trust (AIMPACT) fund. AIG are working with the Falkland Islands veterinarian to agree a suitable time for the vet to visit.

3. Supplementary Expenditure Estimate

The Director of Resources provided details of anticipated spend for specialised advice to ensure that the contract for the agreed subsidy between AIG and Sure South Atlantic Ltd contains the necessary safeguards to ensure service provision received aligns to that expected under the Memorandum of Understanding. The DoR explained that once more accurate amounts are confirmed a Supplementary Ordinance will be brought before Council formally.

4. Council Representation at the Service of Remembrance

The Administrator confirmed that the annual Service of remembrance will take place at St Mary's Church on Sunday 10 November 2024 and will be led by Lay Minister Alan Nicholls. There will also be a short briefing/rehearsal, for persons taking part in the Service on Friday 08 November 2023 at 17:00 at St Mary's Church. The Administrator

requested that Councillors consider who they would like to represent elected members at the Service of Remembrance. Councillors nominated Councillor Laura Shearer to attend and lay the wreath on behalf of the Ascension Island Council.

6. Any other business

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

- i. **Meeting with Youth Council:** Councillor Kerry Benjamin explained that herself and Councillor Nicholls recently met with the Student Council from Two Boats School to discuss a range of subjects, such as playground equipment, perimeter fencing, as well as safety equipment. The Administrator thanked Councillor Kerry Benjamin for the update and requested that a Councillor Enquiry Form be submitted to address the specific questions raised.
- ii. **Oxford University Researchers:** Councillor Kerry Benjamin raised concerns about the recent research visit by the rare earth metals team from Oxford University and was keen to ensure public consultation is conducted in the event of any potential request for mining. Councillors also expressed concern about the absence of engagement with Council from the research team prior to and during the visit. Councillor Shearer highlighted that the research team included Ascension Island in their company name, which may be misconstrued for having the support of the community on island. Councillor Shearer emphasised the importance of fully considering any potential environmental impact prior to any further studies. The Administrator assured Councillors that the visit was only to conduct initial research, nothing further had been discussed and that findings would be shared with Council when received. He offered to schedule a meeting with Councillors and the research team to raise their concerns. The Administrator thanked Councillors for their comments and encouraged them to feedback constituents concerns at the Joint Ministerial Council later this month. The Administrator added that Councillors may wish to raise a memo on the matter to allow further discussion at a future council meeting. Councillor Shearer reported receiving several enquiries from constituents regarding the seismometer equipment left on Ascension and suggested that AIG may wish to issue a Public Notice informing the public of what they are, what they are doing, with a note to not disturb them.
- iii. **Luggage Allowance:** Councillor Gordon Worthington requested confirmation of the luggage allowance afforded to preferred Customer Agreement Members. Employees of PCA organisations are entitled to 30KG hold luggage and 8KG of cabin luggage. Non PCA (private) customers are entitled to 20KG hold luggage and 8KG of cabin luggage.
- iv. **KBP & Bonfire Night:** Councillor Shearer requested that thanks be relayed to the AIG teams that assisted with the King's Birthday Celebrations at the Residency and Bonfire Night in Georgetown.

The next formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council will be held on Thursday 28 November 2024.

The meeting closed at 10:30.

Siobhan Stewart
Clerk to Council