

**MINUTES OF THE ASCENSION ISLAND COUNCIL**  
**MEETING HELD IN THE COURT HOUSE,**  
**Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at 11:00 hrs**

Present: HE The Governor, Mark Capes  
Colin Wells, Administrator  
(by telephone) Frank Wastall, Attorney General  
Catherine Leo, Director of Resources  
Councillor Samantha Arms-Lawrence  
Councillor Toni Bendall  
Councillor Nicholas John  
Councillor Larry Poultney  
Councillor Caroline Yon

In attendance: Walter Scott, Solicitor General  
Nicola Dillon, Clerk of Council

Absent overseas: Councillor Keturah George  
Councillor Cyril Leo

### **1. Introductory Remarks**

The Governor opened the meeting and after welcoming members he remarked about the ease of chairing a meeting on Ascension as opposed to joining by telephone from St Helena. The Administrator told the Governor that his successor, Marc Holland, was attending the meeting from the public gallery. Mr Holland was on a familiarisation visit to Ascension.

### **2. Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the AIC meeting held on 10 January 2014, were confirmed as a true record.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **3.1 Policy Paper: Improving Ascension Island's Protected Areas Network**

The Administrator informed members that further action was pending the establishment of the new Biodiversity and Fisheries Committee. The Solicitor General said that he had been tasked with drafting a set of preliminary ordinances so that the new committee would have a starting point when they meet. The Administrator said that the new committee would take an active role in scrutinising the text of the proposed legislation and he hoped that some form of public consultation would take place in due course. He confirmed that the Biodiversity and Fisheries Committee would be fully supported by the Government.

#### **3.2 Paper: Education: Two Boats School**

The Administrator reported that there were a few points of progress on this issue and reassured members that the Head Teacher of Two Boats School was actively seeking ISI inspection; although there were no confirmed dates yet, he hoped that it would take place during the current school year. Since Council last met the Administrator had met with the parent representatives of the School Governors' Committee and Cllr Yon had also met with the Head Teacher and senior team of Two Boats School. Both of these meetings were productive and there were some useful points to take away. Cllr Yon reiterated this statement and told members that the Head Teacher and senior team were concerned by the messages which were being circulated about the poor

standards of teaching at the school. They wanted to move forward together with the Council and to draw a line under the recent issues.

### **3.3 Clarification of project documentation process/Wasp Block**

There was not much to report on development at Wasp Block, however, the Administrator told Council that the current budget process would include business cases for all capital expenditure. It was anticipated that the budget would be presented to Council soon, after it had been to Finance Committee. The Administrator told members that it was difficult to continue the discussion on Wasp Block as it was still part of an on-going legal case between the former Director of Resources and AIG and to comment would possibly prejudice the case. The future proposals for this building included using it as a family home for the next Administrator or as VIP accommodation.

### **3.4 Training for new Councillors**

The Administrator has been liaising with Kedell Worboys, SHG UK Representative, about arranging training via the CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association); the CPA had not dismissed the possibility of training members of the AIC – they have worked with members of the Commonwealth who were not members of the CPA in the past. He hoped to be able to update members soon.

## **4. Legislation**

The Island Council had held a very useful pre-meeting on Monday, 10 February, which has also been preceded by an Away day on 30 January when members looked at the following legislation:

- i) The Island Government (Ascension) Ordinance, 2008  
Council Committees (Procedures) Rules, 2014

Following the pre-meeting it was decided to remove the function of secretary from the draft rules and to amend the number of members required for a quorum to one less than the total number of members appointed. This was due to an amendment which was being made to the Island Government (Ascension) Ordinance, 2008, which reduced the number of elected members on each committee from three to two.

**All five elected members who were present voted in favour of the proposed legislation.**

- ii) The Island Government (Ascension) Ordinance, 2008  
Constitution of Island Council Committees

The draft Gazette Notice established the setting up of the following committees and their membership:

Biodiversity and Fisheries Protection Committee: Cllr Caroline Yon (Chairman) with Cllr Samantha Arms-Lawrence, Cllr Keturah George and Dr Sam Weber as members.

Post 2016 Vision Committee: Cllr Larry Poultney (Chairman) with Cllr Nicholas John and Cllr Keturah George as members.

**All five elected members who were present voted in favour of the proposed legislation.**

- iii) The Island Government (Amendment) Ordinance, 2014

The draft Ordinance amended the Island Government (Ascension) Ordinance, 2008, to reduce the number of elected members on Council Committees from three to two. It also amended section 4, Quorum for Committees, to reflect this change with the quorum for Council

Committees to be one less than the total number of members appointed.

**All five elected members who were present voted in favour of the proposed legislation.**

The Attorney General's view was sought on the proposed legislation and he confirmed that he was content with the proposals. The AG said that it was important that the rules worked for Ascension as they were based on the rules for St Helena. He added that it was relatively easy to amend if it becomes necessary in the future, however, the rules would provide the framework to enable the committees to function.

iv) Customs (Export Control) (Amendment) Regulations, 2014

The proposed amendments to the Regulations included adding Spiny Lobster to the list of goods prohibited from being exported without a permit granted by the Administrator. There was also an amendment to change the word 'prescribe' to 'determine' in sub-regulation 4 of the Customs (Export Control) Regulations, 2010, Regulation 2, which was general housekeeping to keep the wording consistent throughout the Ordinance.

The drive to add the Spiny Lobster to the list of prohibited goods arose from a concern that large numbers of crayfish were being exported without any controls being in place.

**All five elected members who were present voted in favour of the proposed legislation.**

Council thus recommended to the Governor that all of the above four Ordinances are enacted.

**5. Membership of EU Monitoring Committee:**

Following discussions at the pre-meeting it was proposed that Cllr Toni Bendall be appointed as Council representative of the EU Monitoring Committee. This committee comprised of members based in St Helena, Ascension and UK and was chaired by the Assistant Financial Secretary (Accounts) for SHG, Dax Richards. The AIG representative on this committee was Catherine Leo, Acting Director of Resources. Cllr Bendall accepted the nomination.

**All members present voted in favour of Cllr Bendall's appointment.**

**6. Councillor's Representative on Ascension Island Charities Board**

The previous Council representative on the Ascension Island Charities Board was Neil Lawrence, however, since the election in October 2013 it was necessary to elect a current member of Council to fill this role. Members proposed that Cllr Larry Poultney be co-opted to the Board and Cllr Poultney accepted the nomination.

**All members present voted in favour of Cllr Poultney's appointment.**

**7. Any Other Business**

**7.1. Saturday Swimming Club (Cllr Yon)**

Cllr Yon told members about the Swimming Club which takes place at Travellers Hill on a Saturday morning. The swimming instructor, Warrant Officer Paul Kersey, who ran the sessions was no longer on island and from April there would not be a qualified swimming teacher to carry on the club. She sought Council's advice on how the club could be supported to carry on providing this training as it played a valuable part in contributing to the community. Cllr Yon highlighted the fact that although the school also offered swimming lessons as part of their curriculum, they too did not have a qualified instructor. Could trainers be brought in to train a few locals, including instructors at the school?

After some discussion it was suggested that the RAF be approached to see if there were Swimming Instructors who might be willing to come to Ascension to carry out training.

Action: To follow up with RAF

The Governor referred to Council's membership on the EU Monitoring Committee and mentioned that in St Helena the Legislative Council nominated Cllr Lawson Henry to be a permanent representative to attend JMC and the Overseas Countries and Territories - European Union Forum in Brussels. Members in St Helena felt that it would be more beneficial to have consistency in their representation. The Governor mentioned this as Councillors on Ascension might like to think along similar lines. The Administrator said that he would raise this at the next informal meeting to gauge councillors' views.

The Administrator said he hoped that the Finance Committee would meet soon. He informed members that Selena MacGuinness from FCO would be visiting in the coming week; she would be working with the DoR to look at the budget. The Administrator wanted to be able to reassure members that they will be considering a quality budget when it comes to them for consideration. It was hoped that during the week that Ms MacGuinness was on island that she would brief members on her findings.

In referring to the draft Employment Ordinance, formerly Workers Protection Ordinance, which Council looked at their Away Day on 30 January, the Administrator said that he hoped to call a drafting meeting with councillors soon. The draft Employment Ordinance sought to update the 1926 Workman's Protection Ordinance.

Finally, the Administrator said he did not envisage that Council would meet formally until March, at which time the Appropriation Order would be presented.

The Council's business came to a close at 11.45am.

Nicola Dillon  
Clerk of Council