



ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT

PRESS RELEASE

Governor's Visit to Ascension

Today I was able to update the first formal meeting of the new Ascension Island Council on recent developments in the long running dispute over the fairness and payment of property tax.

In anticipation of a full settlement, our largest debtor, the MOD, has confirmed the validity of payments made some months ago and also paid an agreed balance. Some issues related to the settlement still remain to be discussed, but this is very good news and I hope it will open up a new era of closer cooperation between the AIG and the main users of the island.

This means that the new Council is not confronted with an impending financial crisis, as was the last one. But it also means that the financial stringency that characterized the last Council will need to continue. That will be achieved by ensuring that all taxpayers, corporate and individual, have a clear say in determining the levels and quality of services.

Further excellent news is that the Foreign & Commonwealth Office has agreed to fund a much needed new crane for the harbour, as well as boost our capital reserves for infrastructure spending by a further £1m.

All this means that the immediate future of Ascension, and the vital work that it does, is assured. The new Council will now be keen to use this much improved situation as a basis for long term sustainability.

Andrew Gurr
8 April 2011