

ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT

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Formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council

1630 on Thursday 16th May 2019 at the Court House

MEETING SUMMARY

Present:	HE Dr Philip Rushbrook, Governor HH Steven Chandler, Administrator Gareth Morris, Director of Resources Allen Cansick, Acting Attorney General	Councillor Samantha Arms-Lawrence Councillor Keturah George Councillor Nicholas John Councillor Alan Nicholls
In attendance:	Sarah Roberts-Favell, Head of Administrator's Office Jane Disley, Clerk of Council	Apologies: Councillor Terence Young [essential duty]

Minutes of the formal Council meetings held on 28 Feb and 25 Mar 2019 were agreed. These minutes would be placed on the AIG website. Matters arising from the meeting on 25 Mar were discussed. A letter received from Lord Ahmad (Foreign & Commonwealth Office Minister) indicated that ongoing UK government funding support for the Ascension Marine Protected Area (MPA) will be delivered at the forthcoming UK government Spending Review, probably in the late autumn. Arrangements for the Council's reinvigorated Hydroponics Committee were discussed – the Committee would report back to the Council at the next formal meeting. Minor amendments to the Road Safety Ordinance and the Appropriation Ordinance were agreed by the Council and its recommendation to amend was accepted by the Governor.

The Council held an initial discussion about AIG's Waste Management Strategy which was launched in early 2019. The project to develop the Strategy had been majority funded by the UK government's Darwin Initiative with some funding and support from the Blue Marine Foundation. The Strategy had been developed with close engagement between AIG and the other employing organisations and followed three key principles: protect the environment from harm; aspiration to work to a UK standard; sustainable funding.

Councillors and the Governor asked a variety of probing questions ranging from infrastructure efficiency (i.e. incinerator, car crusher etc), to long term financial sustainability and engaging other employing organisations, to pest control. The Administrator noted that the Strategy was in the early days of implementation and there was still much to learn and do in order to maximise the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the waste management operation. It was in everyone's interest – AIG, other employing organisations, the community – to be involved to make a success of the Strategy.

The main item of discussion under Any Other Business (AOB) was the concerns raised with a number of councillors about future Design Technology (DT) teaching provision at Two Boats School. The primary concern was that the recent job advert on the AIG website indicated that Humanities teaching was being prioritised over DT and therefore DT was no longer valued at the School. Cllr George read a statement of concerns collated from parents', teachers' and Governors' inputs. Other councillors echoed some of the same concerns that had been raised with them. The Director of

Resources responded to the points raised to reassure the Council that DT was valued and the School's current recruitment strategy was focused on delivering a broad and appropriate curriculum with awareness to the balance of teaching resources. The school would benefit from both a DT and a Humanities teacher, and while filling the vacant post with an applicant who could teach both would be ideal it was acknowledged that this might not prove possible. The Director of Resources explained that though not ideal the teaching of Humanities could still be covered at the School by current teaching resource, but, as everyone was aware, the teaching of DT could not. Therefore, it was expected that the recruitment of a teacher with DT teaching capability would always take priority, which was why a second advert with more of a DT focus had been released to sit alongside the first.

The Administrator, while noting his belief that this was not properly Council business, nevertheless acknowledged the strength of feeling about this subject. He welcomed the Head Teacher's 15 May communication as a useful contribution to help better inform parents about the School's plans. He noted that the School had been clear that it does value DT and was making efforts to continue its teaching, but that it could also not ignore the teaching of Humanities. He proposed that the current recruitment process be allowed to run its course to see if it yielded a positive result. As a contingency, the Head Teacher should be asked now to start to explore other options, consulting with teaching staff and Governors, in case the current recruitment proved to be unsuccessful. He acknowledged this was a difficult balancing act and expressed his thanks to teachers, parents and Governors, and the Head Teacher and Director of Resources for their efforts to find the right balance.

Other items discussed under AOB were progress with work to reopen the Georgetown swimming pool and to update the AIG website.

The Administrator noted his intention to recommend to the Council at its next formal meeting a date for Council dissolution ahead of a General Election which would be held later this year.

The meeting closed at 1805hrs.

J Disley

Jane Disley

Clerk of Council