



Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council

1630 on Thursday 30th May 2019 at the Court House

MEETING SUMMARY

Present: Steven Chandler, HH Administrator
Gareth Morris, Director of Resources
Allen Cansick, Acting Attorney General
Councillor Keturah George
Councillor Nicholas John
Councillor Alan Nicholls
Councillor Terence Young

In attendance: Sarah Roberts-Favell, Head of Administrator's Office
Siobhan Stewart, Ops Manager
Graeme Knibbs, CSSF Project Manager
Jane Disley, Clerk of Council

Apologies:
Councillor Samantha Arms-Lawrence

1./2.Welcome and Matters arising (from last informal meeting on 2 May 2019 – updates in italics).

2.a) Summary of Council protocols

Update & decision: A copy of a 2009 'Rules of procedure' which might prove useful in forming the basis of an updated summary of Council protocols had been circulated.

Update: *Its provenance had been reviewed and A/AG confirmed there was no evidence to suggest it had previously been adopted. It would therefore need to be reviewed when the new Crown Counsel was in post.*

Action: ***Clerk to bring to the attention of the Crown Counsel who arrives in in Sep.***

2.c) Firearms Ordinance

This proposed new Ordinance had developed from discussions about the Spearfishing Ordinance in 2018. The St Helena Firearms Ordinance was not considered suitable for Ascension and a new draft had been drawn up. The draft would need to be reviewed by the Council.

Update: *A/AG confirmed the background and advised that he planned to discuss it with Police Inspector Kewley during his visit to St Helena in week beginning 3 June.*

Action: ***A/AG to discuss the origin and aims of the draft Firearms Ordinance with Insp Kewley and report back.***

2.e) Road Safety Ordinance

Update: The Clerk had placed this on the agenda of the next formal meeting on 16 May.

Update: Councillors were reminded that after discussion about the term 'medical assistants' the policy had been returned to AG's Chambers to be reworded. Additional minor changes were then proposed and the amended version would need to be presented to the Council for review and approval.

Update: *This had been presented and approved at the formal AI Council meeting on 16 May.*

4. Medical complaints procedure from St Helena

Update: A draft 'Complaints' policy and 'Charter of Patients' Rights' for Ascension had been prepared several years ago ahead of the ISO review but they had never been agreed and adopted. A recent review had been undertaken to combine the draft 'Complaints' policy document with the St Helena policy to create a suitable policy/procedure covering access to health care on Ascension. The combined draft would be ready for circulation to councillors once minor legal aspects had been addressed. At that point feedback could be received/managed via email or via further discussion at a Council meeting if required.

Update: *The amended version, which contained very minor legal tweaks but was otherwise unchanged from the version previously presented, had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr Nicholls noted he had some comments to make. This item was therefore held over to the next meeting.*

Action: Cllr Nichols to present feedback on the proposed draft ahead of the next informal meeting.

3. Animal health and welfare

The 'Animal Welfare on Ascension Island – Summary of Options' paper had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Dir Cons talked through the options and councillors provided feedback on each. No additional options were proposed.

Action – domestic animals: Projects & Policy Officer to continue to explore options and suggestions for improving communication about risks/costs, for minimising instances of pets being abandoned and for providing care when pets are unavoidably left behind [option 1].

Action – domestic animals: Projects & Policy Officer to further research possibilities for additional vet cover from St Helena [option 3].

Action – donkeys: Policy & Projects Officer to further research the sterilisation option and how best to implement it then report back – to include liaison with Tristan da Cunha which had taken similar steps in the past [option 2].

Action – donkeys: Policy & Projects Officer to follow up liaison with the donkey sanctuary on St Helena to explore any possible options in more detail [option 3/4].

Update: The Policy & Projects Officer provided an update and sought to establish, especially with regard to donkeys, the driving force behind the desire to move forward with animal welfare. Given the number of attempts to resolve these issues in the past it was clear that there would be no single or easy solution. It was agreed that thorough research into previous discussions and activities should be undertaken in order to prepare meaningful options for review and possible trial.

Action: Policy & Projects Officer to continue with previously agreed actions. This would include a thorough investigation of earlier animal welfare activity and the findings would be drawn together into one document, primarily focussing on donkeys, which would present meaningful options for discussion and potential trial.

Update: *The P&P Officer was still working on his paper and intended to present it at a future informal meeting shortly. In the meantime, the 'Moving to Ascension' document on the AIG website had been revised to include greater detail about shipping pets to Ascension and the risks involved.*

Action: P&P Officer to present his animal welfare paper at a future informal meeting.

3. Operations update

In the absence of Director of Operations & Facilities, the Operations Manager and CCSF Project Manager each provided an update within their areas of responsibility: ongoing AIG works and CSSF

projects¹.

a) Georgetown swimming pool: Now that use of water from the turtle ponds had been agreed, this would simplify the repair. Replacements for the corroded ladders had recently been approved. Other preparation work would continue until delivery of the ladders.

b) Turtle ponds: A lack of manpower had held up this project but one AIG operative was due back on island shortly and another had recently been recruited. This team, along with two from the Plant team, would restart the work which would include closing the gap in the wall between the two ponds.

c) Street lighting: The solar lights for the trial were still to be delivered. If they proved successful the lights would be used more widely around the island.

d) Fuel station: There would be a trial opening once a week between 0900 and 1030 starting on 13 Jun for three weeks. The petrol nozzle was on order; once delivered by the supplier to the RAF base in the UK it could be booked onto a flight.

e) Two Boats playground: The Waste Management team would now check the playground twice a week. During a recent inspection it had been noted that the climbing frame was corroded and was therefore unsafe. It had been cordoned off and a replacement would be investigated with input from the public, particularly children. In future the playground could be included in the Ops inspection/maintenance programme.

f) Refuse truck: The replacement vehicle was due on the October FIRS. The vehicle would have suitable graphics on the side in support of the Waste Management Strategy's themes.

g) Asbestos survey: In this three-stage process, approximately 20 expressions of interest had been issued, 6 companies had returned the pre-qualification questionnaire and invitations to tender would likely be sent out next week. The purpose of the survey was to identify the type and scale of the asbestos issue throughout AIG buildings and offer recommendations for dealing with it eg remove it or manage it. This was a specialist skill and would not – at this stage – involve AIG staff directly.

h) Property condition survey: This was also a three-stage process which would begin next week. The purpose was to collect data to assess component replacement; this would feed into a 30-year business plan by helping to record the current state of AIG occupied housing and gauge what mix of housing AIG would need in future.

i) Rewiring project: This tender process would start in August, after the asbestos survey had reported in order to better safeguard project staff. The work would cover AIG occupied properties, and information from the work would feed into the condition survey.

j) Hospital feasibility study: Work was underway to identify potential consultants.

k) Pierhead repair: An order for materials had been placed to allow AIG to undertake resurfacing work on the pierhead. Some design details were outstanding but the work was

¹ These topics were described and discussed in the AI Council meeting on 19 Mar 2019.

scheduled to begin in August, taking into account the works programme and the criticality of resources.

l) Corrosion control: Work was underway to identify suppliers of appropriate corrosion control shelters in order to plan ahead to minimise future salt corrosion.

4. Income Tax Rates & Allowances Ordinance

Dir Res explained that this amended Ordinance would be presented at the next formal Council meeting. The purpose of the amendment was to reflect the name change of two employing organisations (Encompass and Seafish Chandlery). The change would ensure that they remained liable for tax in future. In the meantime, although the change could not be applied retrospectively, it had been made clear to the companies that they would be held responsible for the existing tax liability.

Action: Dir Res would present the amended Ordinance at the next formal Council meeting for discussion – if required – and to vote on recommending its acceptance, or otherwise.

5. Election 2019

The Administrator explained that he intended to submit a Memorandum at the next formal meeting to propose dissolution of the present Council on Friday 30 August. This would allow for an election on 26 Sep and nomination of candidates by 11 Sep. These dates would allow a new Council to be in place well ahead of the Joint Ministerial Council in the UK (end Nov 2019) and allow eligible voters returning on the mid-Sep Airlink flight to vote. All agreed that the dates were acceptable.

Action: Administrator to prepare a Memorandum for presentation at the next formal Council meeting.

6. Any other business

- a) Governor's visit (8-14 July): The Administrator confirmed that the new Governor would visit Ascension between 8 and 14 July. A programme had been drafted which would include a public meeting and reception, an informal Council meeting, and various other key meetings. The Governor had been determined to visit early in his tenure.
- b) Administrator on leave (9-24 June): The Administrator confirmed that he would be off-island on leave from 9 to 24 June. The HoAO would be Acting Administrator during his absence.
- c) CSSF Review: HoAO advised that the FCO would conduct a Conflict, Stability and Security Fund programme review in June. This was a routine annual event, similar to an audit, which would look back at the previous year only (FY 18/19) to assess programme progress, if it was on track to achieve its outcomes and impact, and whether any adjustments were necessary. It would be a desk-based exercise and would involve a telephone conversation between the reviewer(s), and Councillors (all together). The conversation would be fairly high level, discussing priorities rather than specific projects and, hence, no detailed knowledge of individual projects would be required. The Administrator, HoAO and Dir Ops would also be part of the review and have separate conversations with the reviewer(s). Once a date had been proposed Council members would be informed. Cllrs asked for

some information about the projects and costs as a reminder.

Action: HoAO to inform Council once a date for a teleconference with councillors had been identified. CSSF Project Mgr to provide some project and cost information in advance of the review teleconference.

- d) Cllr Nicholls off island (9 Jun – 13 Jul): Cllr Nicholls advised that he would be off-island at on St Helena primarily to attend a Church Synod meeting, and would therefore miss the next meetings. Given that the next informal meeting would also coincide with the rescheduled FIRS, both Cllr George and Cllr Arms-Lawrence would also be unavailable. The meeting would therefore need to be postponed.

Action: Clerk to propose, via email, an alternative date in the week commencing 17 Jun.

- e) Care for Georgetown greenery: Cllr George brought to the meeting a concern from a member of the public about the lack of care for shrubs and trees around Georgetown. There had not been time to seek details, so it would be held over to the next meeting.

Action: Cllr George to obtain more information and raise the topic again at the next informal meeting.

6. Date of next meetings

The following forthcoming dates have been agreed:

- Informal –week commencing 17 Jun 2019 at 1630 (*Clerk's note: 18 Jun proposed*)
- Formal – 27 Jun 2019 at 1630
- Informal – 11 Jul 2019 at 1630

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 1740hrs.

Jane Disley
Clerk of Council

Items pending further review [11 Apr meeting]:

2.e) Ordinances Review

Update & decision: This would be a major piece of work and would therefore best sit with the new Crown Counsel (due on island August 2019).

Action: Acting Attorney General to pass on to Crown Counsel in due course.

The new Crown Counsel was expected to arrive in August 2019

3. JMC points for discussion at formal meeting

Update & decision: These had been covered at the formal meeting held on 28 February. The Administrator took the opportunity to advise the Council that at its recent meeting on 4 April the AISC had agreed to look at updating its policies to include vulnerable adults.

Action: The new Social Worker (due on island in August 2019) would be asked to follow up this work.

The new Social Worker was expected to arrive in August 2019