**EXCO meeting of 21 February 2012**

Our first paper was a record of the SHG response to reports by the Public Accounts Committee on their formal sessions held on 29 July and 18 November 2011. Discussion of the response focused on the broader issue of ensuring that public servants took due account of the PAC’s reports and acted on them as necessary. It was important that PAC reports were viewed positively, not least because they can assist the public service to function more efficiently and so deliver better value for money.

We then noted a short information paper which set out the agenda for a meeting of Legislative Council, to be held on 24 February. The next paper invited members to approve the ‘Dogs and Cats Regulations 2012’. This was essentially a formality as the Dogs and Cats Ordinance is already enacted.

We then considered a paper which proposed an increase in freight and passenger tariffs on the RMS St Helena. This matter also featured in ongoing talks with the DfID officials who are here to discuss the level and focus of UK development aid to St Helena over the next three years. The last increase in the freight tariff was introduced way back in March 2008. To keep pace with increasing costs the tariff will rise by 12% in 2012/13. Council accepted that passenger tariffs would have to rise by 4% to take account of inflation predicted for South Africa and the UK.  Both increases will take effect from late July 2012. A general discussion then followed on the need to ensure that we adequately address the needs of the less well off in our community.

Under any other business we discussed the progress of the current round of consultations on the Land Development Control Plan. I took the opportunity to mention to Councillors that work was underway to tweak some aspects of the Immigration Control Ordinance 2011. This would include an adjustment to the way certain applications for St Helena status are handled.  We heard also the good news that Basil Read are bringing forward by some eight months their plan to construct a new and much larger Bulk Fuel Installation - work on this will now begin around April  this year. The point here of course is that larger fuel storage tanks should help to keep fuel prices down.

Thank you for listening,

**Mark Capes**

**Governor**

**21 February 2012**