

Minutes of the Meeting of Executive Council held on Tuesday, 27th April 2021 at 9.30am in the Council Chamber

Present: His Excellency the Governor (Dr Philip Rushbrook)
The Hon Chief Secretary (Mrs S O’Bey)
The Hon Financial Secretary (Mr D L Richards)
The Hon Attorney General (Mr A T Cansick)
The Hon C R Beard
The Hon C G Buckley
The Hon A A Green
The Hon L A Henry
The Hon D F Thomas

In attendance: Head of Corporate Support (Mrs C A George)
Head of News (Mrs K Yon)
Head of Governor’s Office (Mr Greg Gibson)

Apologies: Clerk of Councils (Mrs C C Johnson)

OPEN SESSION

102.1 Welcome

The Governor welcomed all to the meeting. The Head of Corporate Support would be taking the minutes in the absence of the Clerk of Councils.

102.2 National Honours and Awards Bill, 2021

The Memorandum was introduced by the Chief Secretary, who reminded Members of the recent advice given by Executive Council with regard to this initiative. The Bill which accompanied the Memorandum provided for the granting of honours and awards to recognise exceptional service by persons who are not eligible for the award of a Badge of Honour by introducing a new Badge of St Helena and the award of Freedom of the City of Jamestown for persons who have made a significant contribution to St Helena and its people.

In considering the Bill, a small typographical error was noted in Clause 13, in that a superfluous hyphen was included and was required to be removed.

Following discussion, Council advised and the Governor agreed that the National Honours and Awards Bill, 2021, should be printed and published and presented as Government business at the next formal meeting of the Legislative Council.

(Action: Clerk of Councils)

102.3 Confirmation of the Open Session Minutes of the 13th April 2021

The Open Session Minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2021 were confirmed.

102.4 Matters Arising from the Open Session Minutes of 13th April 2021

There were no matters arising from the Open Session Minutes.

102.5 Any Other Business

102.5.1 Uplift in IRB and Basic Island Pension Payments

The Hon Clint Beard asked whether it was intended to have the 6 monthly uplift in IRB and Basic Island Pension payments, as had been recent past practice. The Financial Secretary explained that work which had commenced on benchmarking the Minimum Income Standard against the Minimum Wage would need to be completed and then any financial implications taken into account. He added that it was the intention to move away from 6-monthly increases in these payments. The Social and Community Development Committee would consider the proposals in due course.

102.5.2 Yacht Club Signage

The Hon Clint Beard referred to a recent local newspaper article regarding the proposed signage for the St Helena Yacht Club which had recently been considered as a development application by Executive Council, as the report appeared to contradict what had been agreed.

The Chief Secretary stated that a member of the public had also written to Members about this matter, stating that contradictory information had been provided as part of the documentation that Executive Council considered. The Chief Planning Officer, who was present, explained the reason for the apparent disconnect in the accounts of this matter, adding that he had observed some anomalies in the documentation that had been presented to Executive Council; this was of no major significance but had been noticed by members of the public when reviewing the Executive Council documentation on the SHG website.

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Editor of the local newspaper that had carried the story explaining what had happened.

(Action: Hon Chief Secretary)

102.5.3 Fit For the Future – Revised Public Service Structure

The Hon Lawson Henry queried why one Portfolio appeared to have a post of Director reporting to the Portfolio Director whilst others appeared to have posts that were Heads of Service. It was explained that a number of the new portfolio Directors had posts within the structure that were entitled Director due to the statutory duties associated with the posts.

102.5.4 EDIP Micro Projects

The Financial Secretary requested that Members' agreement by email of the various Micro projects to be funded from this financial year's EDIP allocation be recorded in the minutes, in particular those which would be over the £50k threshold.

During discussion it was noted that the purpose of Micro Projects funding was to benefit the community whilst the overall aim of EDIP funding was for wider economic development.

102.5.5 Budget Settlement 2021-22 Financial Year

The Financial Secretary made reference to the recent notification from the FCDO that the budget settlement for the 2021/22 financial year would be the same as that awarded for 2020/21. This was a very good result for St Helena, taking into account the economic circumstances in the United Kingdom as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. However, there was still a lot of work to be done locally, as there was a deficit of £750k to be filled compared to the latest SHG submission. A draft Memorandum of Understanding had been received from the FCDO the previous day suggesting that funding for St Helena Airport Limited should reduce by £500k with a corresponding increase of £500k in the contingency funding allocation to cover the cost of maintaining access to St Helena.

HE the Governor extended appreciation to all at the FCDO and in the Governor's Office who had lobbied hard for this outcome. In response to a question from the Hon Derek Thomas about the possibility of uplifting the IRB rates now that the budget settlement was known, HE the Governor said that there should be no public announcement made about the budget settlement at this time.


102.5.6 Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2021

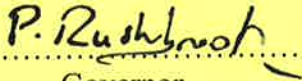
The Attorney General had circulated a copy of the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill to all Members by email and was seeking approval for this urgent matter to proceed to a formal meeting of the Legislative Council on Friday, 30th April 2021.

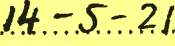
The Social and Community Development Committee had considered also similar correspondence and was content for the Bill to proceed.

Following further explanation from the Attorney General and discussion, Council advised and the Governor agreed that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2021, should be printed and published and presented as Government business at a formal meeting of the Legislative Council on 30th April 2021, noting that a Certificate of Urgency to be signed by the Governor would be required to accompany it.

(Action: Clerk of Councils)


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Clerk of Councils


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Governor


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Date

