

(Translation)

**Islands District Council
Minutes of Meeting of the
Community Affairs, Culture and Recreation Committee**

Date : 3 July 2023 (Monday)

Time : 2:00 p.m.

Venue : Islands District Council Conference Room,
14/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Present

Ms LAU Shun-ting (Acting Chairman)

Mr YU Hon-kwan, Randy, MH, JP (Arrived at around 2:08 p.m.)

Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, SBS, MH

Mr WONG Hon-kuen, Ken

Mr HO Chun-fai

Mr HO Siu-kei

Mr NG Man-kit

Mr WAN Yeung-kin

Mr FONG Lung-fei

Attendance by Invitation

Dr LUK Wan

Chief of Service, Kowloon West Cluster Family Medicine &
Primary Health Care Services, Hospital Authority

In Attendance

Mr LI Ho, Thomas

Assistant District Officer (Islands)1, Islands District Office
Deputy District Leisure Manager (District Support) Islands,
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Ms KWOK Lai-kuen, Elaine

Senior Librarian (Islands) (Acting),
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Ms Merry LIM

Senior Manager (New Territories South) Promotion (Acting),
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Ms LAM Fong-shing, Florence

Senior School Development Officer (Wanchai & Islands),
Education Bureau

Mr WONG Chi-leung

Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Central Western/
Southern/Islands)2, Social Welfare Department

Mr WONG King-chuen

Chairman, Islands District Sports Association

Secretary

Mr YEUNG Chiu-cheong, Mark

Executive Officer (District Council)1, Islands District Office

Absent with Apologies

Mr WONG Man-hon, MH (Chairman)

Ms WONG Chau-ping

Mr KWOK Ping, Eric

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**Welcoming Remarks**

The Vice-Chairman Ms LAU Shun-ting said that the Chairman was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments and she would chair the meeting. She then welcomed representatives of the government departments and organisations as well as Members to the meeting and introduced the following department representative who attended the meeting:

- Ms KWOK Lai-kuen, Elaine, Senior Librarian (Islands) (Acting) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), who stood in for Ms CHU Po-yee, Polly.

2. Members noted that Ms WONG Chau-ping and Mr Eric KWOK were unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

I. **Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 6 March 2023**

3. The Acting Chairman said that the captioned minutes had incorporated the amendments proposed by the government departments and organisations and had been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting.

4. The captioned minutes were confirmed unanimously without further amendments proposed by Members.

(Mr WONG Man-hon had asked Mr Randy YU to present the question of Item II on his behalf. However, as Mr Randy YU had not yet arrived at the meeting, the Acting Chairman suggested that Items III and IV should be discussed first.)

### III. Reports on the work of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in Islands District

#### (i) Cultural Activities

(Paper CACRC 10/2023)

5. The Acting Chairman welcomed Ms Merry LIM, Senior Manager (New Territories South) Promotion (Acting) of the LCSD to the meeting to present the paper.

6. Ms Merry LIM briefly presented the paper.

7. Members noted the content of the paper.

#### (ii) Extension Activities held in Public Libraries

(Paper CACRC 11/2023)

8. The Acting Chairman welcomed Ms Elaine KWOK, Senior Librarian (Islands) (Acting) of the LCSD to the meeting to present the paper.

9. Ms Elaine KWOK briefly presented the paper.

10. Members noted the content of the paper.

#### (iii) Sports and Recreational Activities

(Paper CACRC 12/2023)

11. The Acting Chairman welcomed Ms Alice CHOW, Deputy District Leisure Manager (District Support) Islands of the LCSD to the meeting to present the paper.

12. Ms Alice CHOW briefly presented the paper.

13. Members noted the content of the paper.

### IV. Reports by Working Group

#### (i) CACRC Activities Working Group

##### “Islands District Cultural Festival 2023”

The “Islands District Cultural Festival 2023” to be presented by the Islands District Office (IsDO) and co-organised by the Islands District Council would be held in August and September 2023. The activities included:

1. “Golden Songs Concert in Celebration of the 26th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”

Date: 8 August 2023

Venue: Auditorium, Tsuen Wan Town Hall

2. “Islands District Cantonese Opera Show in Celebration of the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” and “Islands District Cantonese Opera Show in Celebration of the 74th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China”

Date: 24 August 2023 and 25 and 26 September 2023

Venue: Auditorium, Tsuen Wan Town Hall and Concert Hall,  
Hong Kong City Hall

14. Mr HO Chun-fai enquired about the number of tickets to be allocated to the rural committees and Members.

15. Mr Thomas Li replied that a fixed number of tickets would be allocated to the rural committee and Members for distribution to members of the public. However, the exact number was yet to be confirmed. Apart from the rural committees and Members, the IsDO would also distribute tickets to the public.

16. The Acting Chairman asked Members to consider whether to endorse the report of the Working Group.

17. Members unanimously endorsed the report of the Working Group.

II. Question on the increase of the consultation quotas and the addition of one doctor on duty at the Mui Wo General Out-patient Clinic  
(Paper CACRC 13/2023)

18. The Acting Chairman welcomed Dr LUK Wan, Chief of Service of the Kowloon West Cluster Family Medicine & Primary Health Care Services of the Hospital Authority (HA) to the meeting to respond to the question.

19. The Acting Chairman said that the HA had provided a written reply for Members’ perusal. As Mr WONG Man-hon was unable to attend the meeting, he had asked Mr Randy YU to present the question on his behalf.

20. Mr Randy YU briefly presented the question.

21. Dr LUK Wan responded as follows:

- (a) The HA had been closely monitoring the utilisation of general out-patient clinic (GOPC) services in various districts and recognised that residents in Mui Wo had a strong demand for public primary healthcare services. In this regard, the HA had implemented a number of measures to enhance the efficiency of the Mui Wo General Out-patient Clinic (Mui Wo Clinic), including the display of a notice outside the clinic indicating the daily consultation quota to increase transparency and

releasing unused civil servant priority discs to members of the public. In addition, chronic disease patients with stable conditions would receive an increased amount of prescribed medications during each consultation with their consultation intervals extended, so that more consultation quotas could be allocated to patients with episodic diseases. According to the Mui Wo Clinic, after the implementation of such measures, residents were generally satisfied with the queuing arrangements. The HA would continue to closely monitor the demand for public healthcare services and strive to provide appropriate clinic services with the limited resources.

- (b) As an increase of consultation quota at the GOPCs involved the allocation of resources, the HA would take into account a range of factors in the planning and development of various public healthcare services, such as the growth of population in the district, the number of service users and patients with chronic diseases, the overall healthcare manpower and the service prioritisation arrangements. The HA noted Mui Wo residents' demand for public healthcare services, but was also aware that the utilisation rate of GOPC services in the urban areas had constantly remained at a high level while that in the Islands District was relatively low, which reflected the varying demands for GOPC services in various districts. The HA would give a holistic consideration to factors such as the service demand in various districts, the manpower supply and the timing, so that appropriate plans could be made to provide appropriate services to the public. The HA would continue to relay the views of Members and the public through various channels, including mentioning Mui Wo residents' demand for GOPC services in the annual work plan of the HA. The HA hoped that the Kowloon West Cluster would have more manpower resources in the future, so that the service capacity of the GOPCs in North Lantau could be increased.
- (c) Regarding the proposal of adding one doctor on duty to the Mui Wo Clinic, he said that any expansion of service scope or enhancement of existing services required additional human resources. Under the current situation of tight manpower supply, the HA had to set priorities for various services and discuss the relevant operational mechanisms through the annual planning forums. The HA would deploy newly graduated intern doctors to different departments based on the urgency of service demands at the time. At present, there were still doctor vacancies at the GOPCs of the Kowloon West Cluster, which reflected the acute shortage of healthcare manpower. In view of this, the HA had taken a series of measures, such as actively recruiting doctors (including part-time doctors) and offering special incentives to encourage doctors to work overtime, so as to maintain the consultation quota. He hoped that Members would understand that there was a shortage of manpower in the GOPCs and it would be difficult for the HA to add one doctor on duty at the Mui Wo Clinic in the short term.

22. Mr Randy YU said that he understood the pressure on the HA and the entire public healthcare system, and noted the efforts made by the HA in the recruitment of doctors. He pointed out that the services provided by the GOPCs in the Islands District could generally meet the demand. However, the circumstance in Mui Wo was unique. Since residents in neighbouring areas (including South Lantau, Peng Chau and Cheung Chau) would also go to the Mui Wo Clinic to seek medical attention, the demand for out-patient services in Mui Wo was higher than those in other areas of the Islands District. With the recent intake at two Home Ownership Scheme housing estates in Mui Wo, which provided approximately 700 housing units, the population of Mui Wo had increased by about 2 000, leading to a rise in the demand for GOPC services. In addition, due to the retirement of some private doctors in the area, residents had expressed concern about the provision of medical services in the area and hoped that the number of doctors on duty at the Mui Wo Clinic could be increased. He supported the HA in releasing unused civil servant discs to the public and providing seats outside the clinics for queuing elderly patients. He also expressed his gratitude to the front-line staff of the HA for their hard work. Regarding the problem of residents being unable to seek medical attention due to insufficient out-patient services quota, he hoped to explore possible solutions with the HA, such as arranging emergency ambulance services to send patients to other hospitals or GOPCs.

23. Mr WAN Yeung-kin said that the GOPCs on Lamma Island were relatively small in scale. However, many residents of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and Yuen Long would travel to Lamma Island to seek medical attention recently, which had increased the workload of the clinics concerned and made the waiting time for consultation longer. He enquired whether members of the public from other districts could seek medical attention at the GOPCs on Lamma Island.

24. Mr HO Chun-fai opined that it was necessary to strengthen the GOPC services in Mui Wo. He said that in the past, residents of South Lantau would go to clinics in Tung Chung for medical consultation. However, given the increasing population of Tung Chung and the lengthened waiting time for consultation, residents then chose to go to Mui Wo for out-patient services. However, at present, the waiting time at the Mui Wo Clinic was very long and South Lantau was far away from Mui Wo, he hoped that the HA could shorten the waiting time for consultation at the Mui Wo Clinic. He said that with the anticipated population growth in South Lantau, the HA should increase its healthcare manpower and strengthen the GOPC services to cope with the demand.

25. Mr NG Man-kit expressed his views as follows:

- (a) Due to the location of his place of work, he often sought medical attention at the Mui Wo Clinic. He noticed that the consultation discs for the clinic were exhausted very quickly.
- (b) A year ago, he had gone to the Mui Wo Clinic to seek medical treatment after bitten by a dog. However, he only arrived to learn that the clinic

did not provide accident and emergency services and the out-patient consultation discs had been exhausted. He hoped the HA would strengthen the GOPC services in Mui Wo, so as to meet the demand of the growing population.

- (c) He had witnessed an incident where members of the public verbally abused civil servants out of dissatisfaction over civil servant priority discs. He hoped the HA could improve its services to reduce the conflicts between the public and civil servants.

26. Dr LUK Wan gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Patients under the care of GOPCs could be divided into two main categories, namely chronic disease patients with stable conditions, including patients with hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol level, and patients with episodic diseases, such as fever, joint pain and influenza. For chronic disease patients who required follow-up, the doctor would arrange the next appointment after each consultation, and the patients did not need to make another appointment or queue for a consultation disc. For patients with episodic diseases, they needed to queue for a consultation disc or book a consultation time slot through the telephone system or the mobile application. The consultation discs for GOPC services were distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, and were not limited to residents of the district concerned. If consultation discs were still available at a clinic, residents from other districts could also seek medical attention at the clinic. The HA would closely monitor the utilisation of the GOPC quota in various districts.
- (b) As regards the rise in the utilisation of GOPC services and the shortage of GOPC consultation quota in South Lantau and Mui Wo caused by the increase in population of the areas, apart from the mitigating measures mentioned above, the HA had also taken other measures, including the introduction of a Public Private Partnership (PPP) programme. Under the programme, the HA could refer a chronic disease patient receiving medical treatment at the Mui Wo Clinic to a private doctor in the urban area for treatment if the condition of the patient was stable and the patient consented, thereby alleviating the pressure on the Mui Wo Clinic.
- (c) As regards the problems faced by the residents of South Lantau, staff of the HA had visited Tong Fuk earlier to understand the situation. The HA was planning to provide video consultation services for residents of South Lantau. The arrangement could not only provide convenience for residents of South Lantau, but also alleviate the pressure on the Mui Wo Clinic.
- (d) The provision of priority discs for civil servants was one of the

performance pledges of the HA. The Mui Wo Clinic offered 10 and five civil servant priority discs for the morning and afternoon sessions respectively. If the number of civil servants seeking medical attention was less than the specified quota, the HA would release the unused discs to the public to optimise resource utilisation. The mechanism had been in operation for many years, and the HA would continue with the arrangements.

27. Mr WAN Yeung-kin said that if people from other districts used the consultation quota at the GOPCs on Lamma Island, residents on the island would be unable to seek medical attention locally. He considered it necessary to establish a mechanism to give priority to residents of the island in the provision of GOPC services.

28. Mr FONG Lung-fei enquired whether the HA could arrange for the provision of video consultation services for residents in remote areas such as Cheung Chau, Mui Wo and Lamma Island. For patients who only suffered from mild symptoms such as colds and influenza, the doctor could prescribe medications for them after a video consultation.

29. Mr Randy YU expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He was aware that the HA had launched a PPP programme for patients with chronic diseases. However, most of the patients seeking medical attention at the Mui Wo Clinic were not patients with chronic diseases.
- (b) As most of the private doctors in Mui Wo area were about to retire, there would be a keener demand for healthcare services provided by public GOPCs.
- (c) Given the remote location of Mui Wo, it was difficult for the residents to travel to other areas for medical attention when they got sick.
- (d) He recalled that during his childhood, for most of the time, there was only one experienced Nursing Officer on duty at the clinic in Tai O to dispense medicines to patients with mild symptoms such as colds and coughs. He asked whether similar arrangements could be made at the Mui Wo Clinic.
- (e) He noted that the HA was considering the introduction of video consultation services. He hoped that the programme could be implemented first in Mui Wo or run in Mui Wo on a pilot basis.

30. Dr LUK Wan provided a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The GOPCs under the HA had provided video consultation services for members of the public infected with COVID-19 last year. As the HA needed to deploy manpower for this purpose, other services of the



GOPCs were affected. At present, the GOPCs had resumed normal services. Since the efficiency of video consultation was lower than that of the traditional consultation mode, the HA planned to pilot video consultation services in a small scale in Tai O and Mui Wo to gain experience, and would expand the scale of the video consultation services in the future subject to resource availability.

- (b) The HA understood that residents of Lamma Island hoped the GOPCs on the island would mainly serve the local residents. However, currently, appointments for GOPC services were mainly made via the telephone system or the mobile application without any district restrictions. Therefore, the HA was not in a position to restrict residents of other districts from using the services of the GOPCs in Islands District. He hoped residents of Islands District would understand. The HA would continue to monitor the utilisation of clinics in various districts and would, subject to manpower availability, provide consultation services to the public in need through various means.

31. Mr NG Man-kit pointed out that every day there were many Mui Wo residents who were unable to obtain a consultation disc at the GOPCs in the district, but the HA seemed to be unaware of the situation. Residents in South Lantau and Mui Wo who failed to seek medical attention at the Mui Wo Clinic had to turn to the clinics in Tung Chung or the urban areas. He opined that the HA should keep track of the daily number of residents who failed to get a consultation disc and improve the services.

32. Mr FONG Lung-fei expressed his views as follows:

- (a) Regarding the arrangements for video consultation, he suggested that the HA should install equipment at the GOPCs and arrange the patients to receive video consultation services at the GOPCs with a nurse in presence to provide assistance and take records.
- (b) He suggested that the HA should consider arranging intern doctors to provide video consultation services for patients with mild symptoms, with complex cases to be taken care of by doctors with more experience, so as to ensure an appropriate deployment of manpower.

33. Mr Randy YU expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He asked whether the HA would allow nurses at GOPCs in remote areas to prescribe medications for patients with mild symptoms.
- (b) Regarding the provision of video consultation services, he agreed with Mr FONG that the HA could set up a video consultation system at the Mui Wo Clinic and arrange a nurse to provide assistance to the patients in the course of consultation. The HA might also consider providing video consultation services at larger GOPCs in the Islands District for

residents of areas with stringent medical resources (such as Mui Wo and Lamma Island), so as to optimise resource utilisation.

- (c) At present, the only private doctor in Tai O was of advanced age and nearing retirement. Since no other private doctors were willing to provide service in Mui Wo or Tai O, he asked the HA to take note of the situation and take appropriate measures.

34. Dr LUK Wan gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Under the existing regulations, members of the public were required to present a prescription by a doctor when collecting drugs at the pharmacies under the HA. The existing regulations did not allow registered pharmacists or nurses to issue prescriptions.
- (b) For video consultations, the HA planned to arrange residents to receive video consultation services at home or at the village offices nearby. They did not need to go to the clinics.
- (c) The provision of video consultation services required additional resources. Currently, the utilisation rate of GOPCs in the urban areas was higher than that of GOPCs in the Islands District. Therefore, it was not possible for the HA to deploy doctors in the urban area for the provision of video consultation services for residents of the Islands District. For the time being, the HA could only consider making use of the existing available resources at the GOPCs in the Islands District to provide limited video consultation services. According to the current plan, video consultation services would be mainly provided for residents in remote areas, so that they did not need to travel a long distance to the clinics. If the manpower situation improved in the future, the HA would expand the scale of video consultation services.

35. Mr Randy YU asked the HA whether video consultation services could be provided at the Mui Wo Clinic.

36. Dr LUK Wan said that there was currently a shortage of manpower of various grades at the Mui Wo Clinic. The HA needed to discuss the feasibility of providing video consultation services at the clinic with the team there. In addition, as the delivery of video consultation services would involve privacy of patients, the HA needed to arrange suitable venues for the provision of the services. Moreover, technical issues such as wireless network were also matters to be considered. Therefore, the HA also needed to conduct a review of the facilities of the Mui Wo Clinic.

37. The Acting Chairman said that after the Easter holidays, the consultation quota at the North Lamma General Out-patient Clinic was insufficient to meet the demand every day. She had subsequently written to the HA to draw its attention to the situation and asked the HA to follow up on it. However, it was not until the end of May

that the situation of inadequacy of consultation quota improved. She hoped the HA would send representatives to the Mui Wo Clinic for an on-site inspection and actively follow up on the problem.

(Mr Randy YU joined the meeting at around 2:08 p.m.)

V. Any Other Business

38. No further issues were raised by Members.

VI. Date of Next Meeting

39. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m. The next meeting would be held at 2:00 p.m. on 6 September 2023 (Wednesday).

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