



This Thursday morning saw island councilmembers gather for the February plenary session of the Formentera Council. Discussion of the different resolutions – all proposed by the administration – was marked by a spirit of compromise.

Unanimity was achieved on a vote to ask the Govern Balear to cede the farmable portion of Can Marroig for the unlaboured land use project currently being pushed by the Formentera Council and the Farmers' Cooperative.

Agriculture, livestock and fishing councillor Santi Juan noted: “This is one of the largest terrains on the island and the Govern has on two separate occasions attempted to cede it to agricultural workers proposing to labour it, although both times the measure fell through. What we are proposing is that, in the same way as was done by the Council at Ca Ses Ferreres, the Govern offer up this parcel of land for use by the Farmers' Cooperative. In this way not only would the land be cultivated, the action would also improve the natural beauty at the national park”.

Javi Serra, spokesman of the Grup Independent de Formentera (GUIF), defended the proposal as well. Serra also predicted that other private landowners would follow suit and offer up their untilld land “in a project that stands to increase agricultural production at the same time that it improves the image of our countryside”.

Councilmembers reached unanimity again on a proposal requesting action on behalf of Spanish government. The measure consisted in requesting that the national administration provide a way for Formentera residents to avoid travelling to Eivissa for a series of commonplace administrative processes like proceedings at the Tax Agency (Agència Tributària), social security and traffic offices and applications for passports.

Councillor Sònia Cardona was charged with raising the measure. Cardona said the move was justified “by the myriad factors that come into play in the case of an island like Formentera. These need to be considered when agents and services of the state are distributed. It shouldn't just be a question of population size”.

The day's plenary also brought final approval – with eight yeas votes from the governing party and five abstentions from the opposition councillors – for the ordinance to regulate business hours, musical and other performances at local restaurants and bars. The measure, brought by Councillor Alejandra Ferrer, was conceived as a way to “bring the ordinances in place up to speed with legislative changes in cultural programming. It additionally functions as a leg-up for musicians on the island who are attempting to practice their trade and would facilitate events planning in the off-season”.

### **Address by Sònia Cardona**

After the portion of the plenary that is dedicated to resolutions, councillor of culture, local heritage, education and human resources Sònia Cardona reported on her offices' activity over the last year. In education, Councillor Cardona recalled the expansion of the Sa Miranda nursery school and the launch of studies in dance at the music school. She noted another change at the conservatory/music school: the addition of violin to the institution's current list of possible instruments of study. The councillor commented: “Thanks to this change we will ultimately see new permutations of musical ensembles here on the island”.

Speaking to her office's work in local heritage, Councillor Cardona highlighted the recent assignation of Es Campament in La Savina as a bé d'interès cultural (an 'asset of cultural interest') as well as the restoration of the Pi des Català defence tower and the old Sant Francesc cemetery.

In culture, the councillor announced the municipal cinema's inclusion in the Platea programme (a national programme of performing arts), a move which is hoped will permit further improvements to the locale. In addition to touting the arrival of digitally-formatted film at the cinema, a general review of the activities overseen by the office of culture was also given.

Gent per Formentera (GxF) and Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), the two parties that make up the ruling government coalition, gave a very positive review of the departments under Cardona's charge. This was contrasted by the review given by the Partido Popular (PP), an appraisal of the councillor's educational model that was mostly critical. Cristina Costa of the Grup Independent de Formentera (GUIF) wished to highlight that “some of the improvements [listed by Councillor Cardona] were put in place following requests made by our party”.

