



Today the Consell de Formentera celebrated its first plenary session of the year, in which councillors endorsed two proposals regarding regulation of inbound vehicles and another on a code of policy at the residence for the elderly, which will open soon.

The Gent per Formentera and PSOE cabinet overcame the abstention of opposition group Sa Unió to gave the green-light to two proposals related to the formentera.eco scheme to cap vehicles brought, driven and parked on the island in 2023.

Councillors voted to endorse a new formentera.eco enforcement period and vehicle ceiling for 2023, a proposal which had been vetted previously by the Consell d'Entitats. As Rafael González, mobility councillor, pointed out, in 2023 the regulatory scheme will be applied for four months, from 1 June to 30 September, one month longer than in 2022 and two months longer than when the system was first launched. Assembly members also handed approval to the ceiling on passenger and rental vehicles, including cars and motorcycles. The new limit has been set at 10,458, four per cent lower than in summer 2022 and sixteen per cent lower than the scheme's year zero. "This was the reduction target set at the beginning of the legislature", the councillor noted.

Councillors also handed provisional approval to a modification of the tax ordinance regulating formentera.eco fees. Under the changes, which had also first received the go-ahead of the Consell d'Entitats, individuals who wish to bring a vehicle on the island must pay double the previous amount. The fee for cars will be €6 per day, €30 minimum, and for motorcycles €3 per day, €15 minimum. "This increase was designed to discourage one-day visits and encourage longer, overnight stays on the island", said González. Formentera.eco fees are waived for residents of Formentera and the rest of the islands, as well as for individuals with electric vehicles, while drivers of hybrid vehicles pay half price.

Councillor González was positive about the four years of regulation, which, in his words, "began

to bear fruit this past summer." "We have managed to cut traffic", he added, "and the scheme puts Formentera in the driver's seat in terms of decisions regarding mobility. This pioneering and by now well-established project also has a balanced budget, and today the neighbouring islands are looking to follow our lead."

Nursing home policy code and opening

The cabinet once again outvoted the opposition to pass the internal policy of the old persons' home and day centre for Formentera's elderly. Rafael Ramírez, social welfare councillor, called the document "the instrument that will allow us to regulate how these new services are operated to further our objectives in better quality of care and social services provision." Formentera's home for the elderly will open its doors in mid-February, once the necessary staff have been hired to provide services. "Today we are embarking on a new service and improving how we care for our seniors", said the councillor.

Foster care

Assembly members came together in favour of partially amending the Consell de Formentera rules regulating money for parenting support and capacity building for foster families "to tailor it to the needs of the local families willing to be part of this service", said Councillor Ramírez.

"Es nostro cel"

Councillors also unanimously backed Formentera's support for a campaign to christen the star WASP-166 as Filetdor and the exoplanet WASP-166b as Catalineta. The proposal is part of "Es nostro cel", a project seeking to include the culture of the Balearic Islands in official celestial names and which includes a petition collected by a group of year four pupils at Bisbe Verger secondary school in Santanyí (Mallorca) to name a solar system formed by a star and its exoplanet after the fable, Na Filet d'Or. Vanessa Parellada, youth affairs councillor, defended the proposal, arguing that it "takes the Balearic culture and language global, not to mention promotes science, literature and culture among young people."

Lastly, plenary members also adopted a proposal brought by Sa Unió representatives urging the Consell de Formentera to improve and extend the frequency of public transport in winter.

Session participants also handed backing to the executive project to adapt and urbanise access to Sa Roqueta, works that will also involve removing architectural barriers and equipping the road for universal accessibility. The €937,637 project also includes plans to beautify the area in a manner appropriate to the surroundings and the environment. The project will be put to tender

in the coming weeks.

Progress report from Councillor Rafael Ramírez

The plenary session ended with remarks from Rafael Ramírez, social welfare, housing, transparency and governance councillor, who highlighted the island administration's work in recent years to guarantee "no one is left behind" after the crises stemming from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Ramírez reviewed the efforts and programmes of the Office of Social Welfare, which in the last year has served more than 4,000 people in person and more than 5,000 by phone. He additionally underlined new infrastructure such as the centre for minors and residence for the elderly. On housing, the councillor announced the upcoming opening of the office of accompaniment, a land transfer so the Balearic Institute of Housing (*IBAVI*) can build more social housing and a new line of assistance for renters. On transparency and governance, the councillor noted that the administration currently complies with 90% of Transparency International indicators and underscored progress at the collective bargaining table with unions, which has meant municipal employees can seek to have the professional grade of their positions certified, as well as stabilisation of the Consell de Formentera workforce.

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