Pitcombe Parish Council - Chairman’s Report May 2018

We completed a full complement of meetings during the past year and, again, the majority of our time was spent on planning matters, having considered 13 applications (seems like more!) and in all cases SSDC confirmed our resolutions. With one exception all applications were approved - the exception being the refusal of outline planning for an eco house on land in Mill Lane which has gone to appeal and the outcome is still awaited. The extensive developments at Emily Estate (Hadspen House) produced enormous quantities of paperwork. It was therefore helpful that at the commencement of the project we had been able to visit the site and gain a very good overview of the proposed works such that much of the highly technical detail could be taken as read and allow us to concentrate on the areas of particular concern to our residents, particularly with regard to the impact of the increased traffic that will be generated when the enterprise is opened to its visitors. The rerouting of A371 and the associated construction of an underpass to link to the Shatwell House development is an indicator to the scale of the undertaking. The combined effect of this project, coupled with the developments at Haynes International Motor Museum and Hauser Wirth encouraged us to look again at possible improvements to the Grove Cross junction. Two meetings have been held with representatives of adjacent parishes and from Emily Estate and Haynes and Somerset Highways to explore what practical options could be considered. These discussions have lost some momentum and we should seek to re-engage in 2018/9.

On a lesser scale, we have arranged the installation of two kissing gates and a Bristol pedestrian gate to replace dilapidated stiles and I am grateful for the volunteer help from Charles Brook, Alan Wells and Robin Currie in these tasks - sometimes is inclement conditions!

Other important initiatives also merit highlighting:

The provision of two defibrillator sets at the Village Hall and Sunny Hill School car park was funded by contributions from the local community and this council and their installation overseen by Robin Currie with familiarisation training provided by Alan Wells. The council will be responsible for the ongoing servicing of these units.

We adopted the redundant Phone Kiosk in Pitcombe but are yet to organise its future renovation and use and we replaced the notice board at Cole. Regrettably the notice board at Ludwell Elms was vandalised on two occasions during the year. Our PCSO has undertaken to patrol the area and there has been no further occurrence.

In recent months, the boundary commission has put out proposals to combine the existing Tower Ward, of which we are a part, with that of Wincanton. We considered this to be inappropriate and submitted counter proposals to combine, if required, with a new ward including Bruton. Particular thanks are due to Caroline Donald for researching the appropriate criteria to support our submission and to our clerk for presenting it.

The council continues to fund an additional verge cut and give grant support to Pitcombe Graveyard and Pitcombe News.

(Details of all grants as per separate sheet)

I conclude by expressing my sincere thanks to my councillor colleagues for their willing support during the past year and to Zoe, our clerk, whose meticulous work and detailed knowledge keeps us all, especially me, on the rails!