

Pitcombe Parish Council

Minutes of Pitcombe Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 14th May 2019 in Hadspen Village Hall

Present: Councillors J. Knight (Chair of the Parish Council), R Currie, C. Donald and M. Groom

Also present: District Councillor Robin Bastable, County Councillor Anna Groskop and Paul Rawson (The Newt in Somerset)

Clerk: Zöe Godden

There were eight members of the public present at the start of the meeting.

The meeting started at 20:01.

1. Opening Remarks and welcome: Councillor Knight.
The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and made a special welcome to new Parish Councillor Mark Groom.

2. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th May 2018.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the minutes as presented.

3. To hear a report from Paul Rawson from The Newt in Somerset.

Paul Rawson explained that the name of the estate had been changed from Hadspen House to The Newt in Somerset was because of the large number of Great Crested Newts that had been found during the development. Many of these were being retained on the estate in old and new ponds. The limited company dealing with the estate will remain Emily Estates.

Paul reported that the garden was now open to the public and noted that many local people had been invited to pre-opening days. Anyone who had attended could obtain a season pass at a reduced price by downloading an app called Candide Gardening. The hotel would be open to the public from September 2019. The Roman Villa project would begin in June 2019 with a view to opening late 2020 to early 2021. The Garden Museum would open in August 2019. The second phase of the hotel at Shatwell House would open in May 2020. The Shatwell site was a little more family orientated and was linked to the main site by the new tunnel under the A371.

Regarding any potential improvements to the junction at Grove Cross, Paul noted that construction traffic would now begin to reduce. While traffic from visitors would increase, the opening time for the garden was 10am, so would miss rush hour traffic. The closing time was 6pm but visitors would leave the estate gradually through the day. Paul said that the estate would employ approximately 100 people, many of whom were local. The number of employees would increase and recruitment days had been operating at Haynes International Motor Museum. There would be a fair spread of staff arrivals and departures through the Day. Paul noted that the estate had already spent £1.5 million on improvements to the road network, including the entrance off the A359 and the straightening of the road on the A371 over the new underpass to

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provide safe passage under the road for animals, food, staff and visitors. Paul thanked everyone for their patience during the A371 road closure. Paul pointed out that the estate had made some minor improvements to the Grove Cross junction by clearing the verges and maintaining these weekly, even though these areas do not belong to the estate. As a result, visibility is much improved. To date, no planning application had required the Estate to make any changes or improvements to Grove Cross but the Estate supported a community led effort to realise improvements to the junction. The Estate had already put up brown tourist signs to direct traffic to the appropriate routes and away from local village roads. The Estate had also invested heavily by putting in internal access roads within the estate to reduce their own movements and remove them from the public highway.

In response to a question, Paul said that there were no plans for public cycle ways to be installed at the Estate, as this would not fit with other users of the garden attraction.

In response to another question, Paul said that between two and four electric vehicle charging points would be installed for use by guests and visitors to the Estate.

Members of the public and the Chairman thanked Paul for the hospitality shown to the Parish Council and residents at the various events.

4. To receive a report on the work of the Parish Council for the year April 2018 - March 2019, including the Annual Accounts year end 31.3.2019.

The Chairman's report and budget report are attached to these minutes.

5. To hear a proposal for the compilation of an Emergency Plan for the Parish (Cllr Currie)

20:32 – Two members of public left.

Councillor Currie described a useful event he had attended last autumn on the topic of emergency planning. This had been a multi-agency event attended by Avon and Somerset Police and Wessex Water amongst others.

After the event, the Parish Council had agreed that, although it did not have a duty to produce an emergency plan, it would be appropriate to do so due to Pitcombe's proximity to the main railway line and trunk roads, as well as the history of flooding in the Parish. Councillor Currie had asked for volunteers to form a group to work on an emergency plan but had received no responses to the piece in Pitcombe News.

20:37 – One member of the public arrived at the meeting.

Councillor Currie noted that the production of an emergency plan did not have to be Parish Council activity and that grants were available so there would be no cost to residents.

Members of the public felt that an emergency plan was a good idea and the the Parish Council should pursue the idea.

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Councillor Wells added that a CPR training session had been held in the Village Hall in April that had attracted 20 attendees. Another session would be held at Sunnyhill School soon and Councillor Wells said that any staff from the Newt would be welcome to attend. The Chairman thanked Councillor Wells for providing the very useful training.

6. To note that the Parish Council is looking for new members to co-opt.

Noted.

7. To discuss any motions of which notice has been given to the Clerk/Chairman.

Neither the Chairman nor the Clerk had received any motions.

8. Closure and thanks.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. He went on to thank the Clerk for her help.

Councillor Knight had not put himself forward for re-election so ex-Councillor Brook gave a short speech to thank Councillor Knight for his work in the role of Chairman over the past years. Ex-Councillor Brook noted that Councillor Knight had always made himself available and given excellent advice on any awkward subjects and had given a lot of thought about how he could help the Council and the wider community. Ex-Councillor Brook also praised Councillor Knight's chairmanship skills.

The meeting ended at 20:44.



Zöe Godden
Parish Clerk