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PITCAIRN ISLAND COUNCIL
Public Meeting Notes held at the Public Hall
Commencing at 2.00pm 18th November 2020

Present:

Mayor Charlene Warren-Peu, Deputy Mayor Kevin Young, Cr Shawn Christian, Cr L Jaques, Cr Lea Brown, Administrator Nick Kennedy and Island Secretary Heather Menzies

Apologies: Cr Michele Christian, Cr Ariel Harding,

In attendance: 18 members of the community,

Welcome: The Mayor & Administrator welcomed the Governor and the community to the meeting

Agenda Item

The Mayor advised the purpose of meeting is for the Governor explain the current situation regarding medical pathways for Pitcairn Islanders who do not hold NZ passports. She handed the meeting over to the Governor.

The Governor confirmed that Pitcairners requiring urgent treatment, for will be medically evacuated to Tahiti as usual. regardless of what passport they hold.

She went on to say that a letter has been written to authorities in NZ requesting a blanket exemption for non-NZ passport holding resident Pitcairn Islanders to enter NZ for routine medical treatment. However, that request has been declined. The Governor said that HMG has been advised that the NZ government will deal with visa applications, from non-NZ passport holding resident Pitcairners, only on a case by case basis and that each application must be applied for individually. This can be done from Pitcairn with assistance from the Administrator as needed.

The Governor reiterated there has been extensive lobbying by the Governor, Deputy Governor and Deputy High Commissioner over the past two months and the importance of getting Pitcairn non-NZ passport holders into NZ of routine medical treatment has been consistently conveyed. She said that NZ and French Polynesia are very aware of Pitcairn's need for humanitarian support but COVID-19 risk management is paramount for NZ border controls and there is little flexibility. She acknowledged that Pitcairn, like the rest of the world, has been hugely impacted by the travel restrictions associated with the pandemic and assured the community they are doing all that they can.

The Mayor thanked her for taking the time to personally share this information with the community and reiterated that there remains very real concern that those who do not hold NZ citizen ship will not get necessary routine medical care as needed.

The Governor then spoke about our relationship with Baroness Sugg who is very much looking forward to the JMC and bi-laterals, particularly with the Mayor. She noted that the Baroness continues to be enthusiastic about Pitcairn.

The Governor also acknowledged the work done by PIO and the Deputy Governor in negotiating the extension of the Silver Supporter shipping contract for the coming year – with potential for renewal. She stated that although voyages will remain reduced for the time being due to the Pandemic i.e. allowing only for voyages between NZ and Pitcairn - we will be ready to move when the time comes.

The Governor spoke about developments relating to various COVID-19 vaccines, which are looking promising. She advised HMG has committed to getting vaccines to the overseas territories as soon as possible and ensuring they are efficiently distributed.

The Governor acknowledged the work done by the Financial Review Committee and Administrator, with the FCDO, on the standard of living basket for Pitcairn and also the work done in preparation for the JMC.

The Mayor thanks the Governor asked the gallery for questions:

Questions from the Gallery

1. Pitcairn is COVID-19 free. Does the Governor think the NZ government view this favourably when considering visa entry applications?

The Governor reiterated that the NZ government is geared around managing and maintaining its borders with zero tolerance of risks which may result in spreading the virus. It has done an exemplary job of doing so. It has applied strict bureaucratic processes to protect its borders and we must all comply with those requirements.

2. The current Teacher is leaving the island in Dec. She does not hold an NZ passport. How is she able to get into NZ when Pitcairn Islanders cannot?

The Administrator advised that the current teacher has had to apply for a visa to enter NZ, just as everyone else has had to and she is still waiting on that application being accepted.

3. The 2020 Child Safe-guarding Audit is taking place shortly. It will be undertaken Child Matters staff. This does not reflect best practice because Child Matters has in fact been involved in developing the island's Child Safe-guarding policies and practice for some time. Going forward, would the Governor not agree that such audits should be undertaken by an independent party?

The Governor said she will take this on-board for future discussion.

4. Why are we continuing to wait so long for the Deputy Governor to action his part in progressing active Settlement Applications? They are taking far too long and applicants, who have paid their fees and met the criteria, should be dealt with in a timely and efficient manner.

The Governor suggested the process should be time-framed if necessary. It was pointed out that there are existing agreed-upon timeframes in place, which are not being adhered to. The Governor said she takes the point and will look into it.

Shawn Christian acknowledge and thanked HMG and PIO for making it possible for the Silver Supporter to pick up the current Med-evac patient and carer in Tahiti.

It was noted that Pitcairn will be represented at the upcoming virtual JMC meeting by Cr L Jaques, Mayor Warren, Deputy Mayor K Young, and the Administrator via teleconference.

Meeting Closed: 2.40pm

Mayor Charlene Warren:

Date: ..1.. / ..12.. / ..2020

