

FILE COPY



PITCAIRN ISLAND COUNCIL

Public Meeting Notes:

COVID-19 Management Protocols

Held at the Square, commencing 1.30pm April 8th 2020

Present:

Mayor Charlene Warren-Peu Deputy Mayor, Cr Kevin Young, Cr Shawn Christian Cr Michele Christian, Cr L Brown, Cr Ariel Harding, Isec Heather Menzies, & Administrator Nick Kennedy.

Full Community attendance

In attendance:

Medical Officer - Dr. Phil Hall

Apologies: Cr L Jaques

Welcome:

The Mayor welcomed the community to the meeting advising that its purpose was to discuss the information within the recently circulated Pitcairn Island Covid-19 Household Resource Information Booklet and provide a public space for questions and answers.

Agenda Item	
Corona Virus Update Dr Hall & Community Feedback and Questions:	<p>There was general discussion about the purpose of the booklet. Community members noted that there are still some planning areas, mentioned in the booklet, which still require procedural development. The Mayor, Medical Officer and Administrator agreed that this was the case. Planning and consultation continue and on-going workshops are planned. As plans develop the community will be kept informed of each step.</p> <p><u>Question from the Gallery:</u> What happens if the Medical Officer goes out to the Silver Supporter, to clear it, and finds there is a suspected case on board – what happens him? What de contamination procedures are planned for him to get him off the ship so as to be able to interact with the community?</p> <p>The Doctor advised that preventative procedures, which will help mitigate the risk of infection will be developed. He reminded the community that, as noted in the booklet, he will be in regular communication with the ship throughout the voyage to Pitcairn. If a crew member or passenger becomes unwell over the 14 day trip the Doctor will know well before the ship arrives at Pitcairn. A sick passenger or crew member would be isolated from others on board and the Captain will then following the shipping company’s own protocols. He reiterated that the Silver Supporter has a detailed procedural document in place for Covid-19 management.</p> <p>The Doctor agreed that medical clearance de contamination procedures post inspection will need to be developed going forward.</p> <p><u>Statements from the Gallery</u> It was noted that Pitcairn is fortunate to not have the virus and that everything must be done to stop it getting here. It was noted by some community members that HMG and Council have agreed to allow GPI contracted staff, their partners and Pitcairn Resident to travel on the Silver Supporter from NZ. As such, ‘silent carriers’ (A symptomatic cases) will be a significant risk to the well-being of the community. They said that regardless of the fact that passengers</p>

will be arriving at Pitcairn after 14 days at sea, on top of 14 days self-isolation in NZ, the world now knows that 2 weeks or 3 weeks isolation is not enough to contain the spread of the virus.

The Administrator and the Doctor advised that the 14-day isolation time frame is the world standard as communicated by WHO and Public Health England.

There ensued general discussion about the rights of Pitcairn residents to travel home and the need for contracted staff to maintain key roles, like Doctor and teacher etc. Some members of the community reminded others that Pitcairn residents have a right to return home – that this is a fundamental human right which has been initiated in countries all over the world.

Some community members expressed that allowing Pitcairners to come home will put the broader community at risk and therefore it should not happen. They said that at this time of world-wide crises many countries have had to put human rights aside – given the spread of the virus. And, though this might be a difficult decision this is what should be done for the greater good.

The Administrator reminded the community that, as stated in the booklet, any residents wishing to home-isolate after the ship has landed passengers, so as to avoid contact with new arrivals, will be supported in doing so.

The Administrator told the community that HMG & Council are trying to both take care of Pitcairners and keep essential services operating. He said that putting 28day isolation requirements in place coupled with medical clearance certificate requirements and the ship's own management protocols all go toward mitigating the risk of infection. These measures are extremely thorough – mores so than many other places in the world.

As discussion focused on whether Pitcairners and others should be able to travel on the Silver Supporter a Councillor stated that the community collectively needs to decide what it wants and say so plainly. And, if they want to stop Pitcairn residents from returning home, they will also have to factor and justify the duration of such a restriction.

Questions from the Gallery

What personal protection procedures should there be for the Longboat crew and landing Crew for disembarking passengers and dealing with freight? It was noted this was not included in the Booklet.

The DM Operations advised that procedures have been developed for the Long boat crew. These have not as yet been documented but this will be done. It was also noted that after 72 hours it's impossible to contract the virus from inanimate objects and surfaces.

How did the passengers, arriving on the Silver Supporter, get their medical clearance certificates in NZ?

The Doctor advised that 1 was via video conference and 2 were face to face. All 3 passengers have been cleared by registered medical practitioners.

So, we have no way of telling whether someone has Covid-19?

The Doctor said yes, that is true – there's no test to determine whether someone has the virus on Pitcairn.

Do we have a ventilator on Pitcairn?

The Doctor advised that the clinic has 1 non-invasive ventilator at hand and 4 oxygenators.

What happens if a yacht turns up requiring urgent medical care?

The Doctor advised that he would be obliged to provide that assistance as a maritime convention and as a humanitarian response

He advised that we would have to use appropriate protocols and personal protection equipment and that this procedure will be developed going forward.

Statements from the Gallery

The social distancing measure of (3ft – 1 metre) included in the booklet is less than in some other countries – Why?

The Administrator and Doctor advised there is a lot of variability on what the ideal social distance is, across the world. 3ft – 1 metre is recommended by WHO and Public Health England.

It was stated that it would be a sad thing if we were to restrict our own residents from coming home and that this would not be community orientated move.

It was stated that Public Health England's estimates, as to how many severe cases we are likely to get if the virus gets to the island, - should be struck from the booklet. As it is only an estimate and of no relevance to Pitcairn given our tiny population.

The Doctor advised that the estimate was reached from current modelling.

It was stated that Pitcairn does not have the virus – we want to keep it out, yet the Government is saying we are willing to take the risk of bringing it here -by letting people land and interact with locals.

The Administrator clarified that almost every country in the world has a degree of flexibility when it comes to border controls so as to get their residents home and to keep essential services operating. He added that Pitcairn's border controls are better than most.

There was discussion about volunteers supporting the isolation hospital, as noted in the booklet, and the practicalities of this.

The Doctor agreed that personal protection procedures for volunteers caring for others will be need to be developed going forward.

Questions from the Gallery

Has anybody thought of bringing a few caskets to the island – for worst case scenario planning?

It was agreed this concept is worth looking into and that procedures for medical staff and carers handling the deceased, as a result of Covid-19 should be developed going forward.

Can we get a Doctors up here for longer than 3 months?

The Doctor explained that most medical practitioners won't come because they needed frequent on-going medical education. Younger doctors have families and are less able to make the commitment.

	<p>The Administrator advised HMG & PIO always try for longer contracts where possible. He advised that contracted staff are not able to bring children to Pitcairn due to the expense of medical insurance costs to cover children, not because of child safeguarding requirements.</p> <p>There was general discussion about those at greatest risk if they contract Covid-19</p> <p>The Doctor advised he has reviewed the medical records and is aware of those who are the most vulnerable. He said the most vulnerable are those who have respiratory illnesses, diabetes and heart disease.</p> <p>There was general discussion about whether vulnerable people should be restricted from undertaking longboat and landing work.</p> <p>It was agreed Council will add a reference to Container Ships and Merchant Ships to the border controls and include tour vessels to cover ships like the Braveheart.</p>
VTC with the Governor	The Administrator invited everyone to attend a video conference with the Governor tomorrow (9 th April – 1.00pm) in the Hall.
	The Administrator reported that he and the Mayor had a teleconference with Baroness Sugg (Minister of Overseas Territories) who conveyed that the British Embassy in Paris is working with the French Government for assistance with establishing a medivac pathway for critically ill patients going forward.

Meeting Closed:
Next Public Meeting: TBC

Signature
Mayor Charlene Warren-Peu: *Charlene Warren-Peu*

Date: *14 / 4 / 2020*