

Minutes of the 81st Annual General Meeting of the Piha Ratepayers' and Residents' Association Sunday 10 January 2021 Barnett Hall, North Piha

Present: Ken Cowan President and 39 members

Waitakere Ranges Local Board - Michelle Clayton, Sandra Coney, Ken Turner, Mark Allen

Auckland Council - Waitakere Ward councillor - Shane Henderson

MP for New Lynn - Dr Deborah Russell

The meeting began with a presentation by Graeme Carrie on 'Piha Lagoon pollution - Status & Solutions'

Key points:

- Initial investigations by T&T report raised two measures to reduce pollution - pollution needs fixing at point source - which includes both private and public septic tanks - and water needs to be kept flowing out to sea, as naturally occurs when there is not sand build-up at the Lagoons mouth. Flow (and pollutant build-up) is not a problem in the winter, when larger seas and heavy rain in the headwaters keep the Lagoon flowing to the sea, but it is in the summer months.
- Public effluent fields by lagoon found to be problematic, particularly leakage and alarm issues
- Auckland Council investigated private septic tanks and found approximately 30 tanks that needed upgrading.
- Council initially dealt with high *E Coli* counts by closing lagoon to swimming.
- R&R organised regular testing of water quality at three points in lagoons - at the entrance where, most of the time, water quality was fine, and in the Domain, where water quality was poorer
- Proposed solutions were controversial. Some local residents thought the lagoon should be left as it was while T&T report recommended improving flow.
- R&R sought support of community to improve flow. With that support, after further investigations in winter of 2020, R&R engaged local excavator operator to open the lagoon to improve flow and allow tidal cleansing, which improved water quality for four months.
- Water quality decreased as summer approached and the sand built up, reducing the flow. Nutrients built up and algae growth started and water quality reached unsafe levels.
- By allowing the lagoon to stagnate, water quality will always suffer. While septic tank leakage issues are improving, increasing the flow throughout year has not been addressed.
- It is essential to keep the lagoon breathing by providing a natural, healthy, estuarian habitat with regular intake of seawater and exhausting of stagnant water.
- An emphasis on a minimal intrusive opening of the stream rather than a mass bull dozer assault is an important and essential element of the proposal.
- Initial digging out cost \$900, moved 100 cubic metres of sand and would need doing 3-4 times per year in summer.
- Council has been approached and says that clearing the channel is classed as 'dredging' and requires resource consent. Application fee for resource consent is \$7,000. Graeme and others disagree over this terminology. Dredging implies the removal of material – our opening by contrast redistributed the 100 cubic metres of sand to the south of Lion Rock and by the next tide the sea had redistributed it naturally,
- Next step is to use community support to ensure regular opening to maintain water flow.

Questions from the floor were taken.

Shane Henderson, Waitakere Ward councillor at Auckland Council, took questions from the floor.

- **Piha Road** - Funding was approved at beginning of 2020, but funding is no longer available as the COVID-19 shutdown resulted in a significant loss of council revenue. Shane reassured the meeting that funding is now available for safety purposes and Piha Road is due to be rebuilt in next financial year (2021-2022). Questions from the floor were taken.
 - Damage to vehicles due to poor condition of road was raised by several residents.
 - Members noted that temporary measures to improve the situation would be improved footpaths and the introduction of feeder buses to transport locals to transport interchange.
 - Residents note that approximately 200 school kids live in Piha, and this results in 30 bus trips per week.
 - In response to a question, Shane will check whether AT is currently in breach of any of its own rules, including whether the width of road is below any legal minimums.
 - In response to a question about what residents can do, Shane indicated that keeping pressure on both him and AT was one of the most effective methods for supporting change.
 - There was general agreement that consultation by AT with residents before any work started would improve both the process and results.
 - The efficiency of the performance of the current roading contractor, Fulton Hogan, was questioned.
- **Council finances** - Current budget deficit is \$500 million. Deteriorating infrastructure requires extra investment of \$2.6 billion, which has not been budgeted for. Shane's view is that council has been under-investing in infrastructure for many years. Funding improvements will require discussions with residents about what levels of rates might be acceptable.
- **Tracks** - Property owners are charged a targeted rate that is aimed specifically at improving Waitakere tracks. One member questioned whether work on tracks in the area had halted.
- **Public transport** - Progress that Shane had been making earlier in the year on public transport in the Ranges was delayed by COVID-19. Providing public transport to major tourist destinations is critical for addressing climate change.

The President, Ken Cowan, thanked Graeme for his presentation and Shane for answering questions and opened the Annual General Meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Apologies

Councillor Linda Cooper, Graeme Caley

MOTION 1

That the apologies be accepted.

CARRIED

Ken Cowan / Bruce Middleton

Minutes of the 80th Annual General Meeting 5 January 2020

MOTION 2

That the draft minutes of the 80th Annual General Meeting held on 5 January 2020 be accepted as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

Ken Cowan / Hanneke Bouchier

Matters Arising

An update was requested from a member on the proposed bridges at Kitekite Falls. R&R has written to council and the Local Board but no concrete response has been received other than that the project has been put off to 2022/2023 financial year at the earliest. There were no other matters arising from the minutes.

President's Report

Ken Cowan presented his 2020 report (attached) and invited questions or comments. Questions were taken from the floor.

MOTION 3

That the President's report be received.

CARRIED

Bruce Middleton / James Dickenson

Elections of Officers and Committee for the 2021 Year

The President announced that the following nominations had been received at the close of nominations on 4 December 2020:

President	Ken Cowan	
Vice President	Hanneke Bouchier	
Secretary	No nominations received	
Treasurer	Graham Cleghorn	
Committee	Jane Caley	Graeme Carrie
	Mike Hales	Phoebe O'Brien
	Natasha Tomlinson	

Therefore, those nominated are elected unopposed. In accordance with clause 11.2 of the Association's Constitution, the committee may have four officers and up to eight members.

The following members from the floor offered themselves for election and were accepted:
Daniel Caley. James Dickinson, Sean O'Brien, and Blair Strang.

MOTION 4

That the election of committee members as noted be accepted.

CARRIED

Ken Cowan / Bruce Middleton

Annual Accounts

Graham Cleghorn spoke to the Financial Report (attached).

MOTION 5

That the Annual Accounts to 31 October 2020 be approved.

CARRIED

Graham Cleghorn / Jane Caley

Subscription

MOTION 6

That the annual subscription for membership for the next financial year remain at \$10.

CARRIED

Ken Cowan / Bruce Middleton

PO Box rental

MOTION 7

That the annual fee for PO Box rental remain at \$90 per annum.

CARRIED

Ken Cowan / Bruce Middleton

General business

NZ National Surf Championships: Sandra Coney spoke to issues relating to the current national surfing championships. Council is meant to control the effects on the environment and on local residents (such as traffic and noise) from such events. Council's events team did not implement an adequate traffic management plan for this event, which could result in parking problems and access issues for emergency services. Local Board will take this issue up with council and AT.

Residents are asked to provide any feedback on the event.

Ken Cowan commented that there was no traffic management plan in effect and that no portable toilets had been installed.

Marawhara Stream issues: A member raised the poor state of the Marawhara stream and lagoon and expressed concern that it was close to ecological collapse. High sand levels are causing the water level to rise and the lagoon to fill with water lily and alligator weed. Ken added that North Piha water group has been working with council on removing sand from the lagoon outlet and stream.

Sandra noted that council's Resource Consent for removal of sand is to protect the road. Currently, weed problems at the Marawhara lagoon and the Claude Abel pond are not being addressed due to council budget restraints. The build-up of alligator weed into dense mats can slow water flow and lead to upstream flooding. Sandra has previously liaised with Healthy Waters on the issue, but work on Claude Abel pond has stopped.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:14 p.m.