

Whareroa Guardians Community Trust Inc
Minutes of 8th Annual General meeting
7pm, 21st April 2015 at the Paraparaumu Library

Present: Liffet Stewart, Ann Evans, Rachel Kiel-Taylor, Theo Barsanti, Michael Keith, Jenny Rowan, Sascha Wassong, Rachel Salive, Jiff Stewart, Matt Barnett (DoC), Bobbie Taylor, June Rowland, Helen Griffiths, Michael Stace, Doug Morrell, Sue Clark, Bob Zuur, Peter Kentish, John Grundy, Paul Callister, Dawn Bush, Jonathan Waterworth, Steve Lewis .

1. Apologies: Scott Hill, Ruby Durrant-Bush, Shane Cave, Sue Blaikie, John Porter, Jan Nisbet, Jill Waterworth, Tony Griffiths, John Lancashire.

It was moved that the apologies be accepted (moved Jenny Rowan, seconded Ann Evans) approved.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was moved that these be accepted as a true and correct record (moved Jonathan Waterworth, seconded Theo Barsanti) carried.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

No matters arising.

4. Chairperson's Annual Report

PROCEED AS IF SUCCESS IS INEVITABLE.

These words were given to me as an inspiration mantra recently. It may well have been the mantra of the Guardians 10 years ago when they were formed and Whareroa Farm Reserve was rescued from privatisation. The current Whareroa Guardians who were some of those original group include Rachel Kiel-Taylor, John Lancashire and Jenny Rowan. Thank you for being there at the beginning and still hanging in there!

With this important anniversary in mind it is with real sense of satisfaction, and joy at what is being achieved at Whareroa that I present this report. Through the work of our fantastic volunteers our focus has been on 2 areas in 2014, advancing biodiversity and increasing recreational opportunities.

Advancing Biodiversity

The planting season in 2014 saw the area between Matai Bush and Upper Bush joined up with the planting of 4,500 plants, and also an extension of the schools' planting above the entrance. Raumati South and Paraparaumu Beach schools have been involved with planting for 3 years now and it is wonderful to see school children bringing their families to enjoy the place that they have contributed to.

In addition Otari Reserve have donated and planted 30 Milk Trees (*Streblus banksii* or Turepo).

These are rare trees and Whareroa is becoming a repository of the species. We are delighted to be entering this relationship with Otari. Further plantings of other species are planned.

Biodiversity is sustained by pest management, both plant and animal. In this endeavour we are aware that one will never win the war but be in a constant battle. We are hugely appreciative of the work of Shane Williamson, Shane Cave, Scott Hill, and their team of trappers who have destroyed over a thousand rodents and mustelids in 2014. Other animal pests include goats which DOC cull annually, and cattle which infiltrate the bush close to Campbell's Mill Road.

Monitoring of wildlife is an important aspect of fostering biodiversity. The birdlife is under the watchful eyes of Helen and Tony Griffith who provide monthly reports. Natalie Stone has been teaching school children about water monitoring on the school trips, which are coordinated enthusiastically by Jan Nisbet who we are very grateful to. Jan is also responsible for the weta motels and the educational signage regarding flora and fauna. Thank you Jan.

Increasing Recreation

Two new tracks have been opened up this year. The East Ridge track is for horses and walkers. The track to the wonderful view at the Rocks has also been cleared and marked with blue poles. These were made possible through the generous grants received from The Walkway Commission and The Partnerships fund with DOC respectively. Huge thanks to Dick Caldwell, the Octogenarian who maintains the mown tracks and keeps both Kermit and Miss Piggy in fine form.

The Mountain bike track is not part of the Guardians projects but we are looking forward to completion of this new downhill track. Steve Lewis and his hard working team including John Rowland have overcome many obstacles, both physical and corporate to have this track almost completed.

There are plans for all these new tracks to have some bench seating and picnic tables as funds become available.

The Footsteps of the Marines has become an annual running/walking event and a rogaining competition has also been run at Whareroa. Three small orienteering circuits are also proving popular with families and school groups. Geocaching is another activity that draws many people to the hills of Whareroa - we certainly do seem to have something for everyone.

Communication

Ann Evans has kept up her regular updates and newsletters with wonderful photographs. The mailing list remains at over 400 people.

We are grateful to Scott Hill and Sue Blaikie for their work with our Facebook and Nature Space pages. We are currently working on development of a website. We received a grant from the Lion Foundation to pay an oral historian. Our guest speaker tonight is that person, Jiff Stewart and we look forward to her enlightening us regarding this project shortly.

Volunteers:

It is the volunteers who keep the progress going. The volunteers input for 2014 totals 4,197 hours. This is approximately \$84000 worth of work done at Whareroa in one year! This includes 866 hours planting and site preparation, and 730 hours of pest control. The person who keeps this data and who is indeed the wheels behind all that happens at Whareroa is the admirable Ann Evans. So it was with great pleasure several of us attended the "Wellys" in November where our esteemed Guardian Ann Evans was a finalist in the Environment section. John Lancashire was also a nominee for his work as Chair of Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park. Ruby Durrant-Bush received an environmental award during the year. Congratulations to her, we are delighted to see the enthusiasm that young people have for Whareroa.

Others who have made a huge contribution to Whareroa over the year are Ian and Penny Redward, Don and Mary Beggs, Dawn Bush, Theo Barsanti and his trustee landie, Rachel Salive. To my knowledge we are the only community group where post mortems of pests are carried out on kitchen tables!! Thank you Sue Blaikie.

Gaps

There are many areas where we would like to be able to put more energy. One is the monitoring of track usage. We know anecdotally that tracks are getting well used. DoC does have some track counters in place, a graph is included from data on the kohekohe track but we would appreciate further funding to enable more accurate knowledge about usage.

The second area sadly is that of security. Several cars in the car park have been broken into, the car park area is clearly becoming a burn out track and the camera footage has not led to reduction of this behaviour. This is an area of concern that needs urgent addressing.

I conclude with a comment about what an exciting time it is to be in the business of conservation.

Marie Brown has recently released a book with the gloomy title "Vanishing Nature" in which she suggests tax breaks and even payment for those who assist with restoration and protection of biodiversity. Environmental management is being reconceptualised, and so the current Guardians will PROCEED AS IF SUCCESS IS INEVITABLE. Liffet Stewart April 2015.

It was moved that the Chairperson's annual report be accepted (moved June Rowland, seconded Bob Zuur) carried.

5. Treasurer's Annual Report

Michael Keith presented the statement of accounting policies and notes (attached). He thanked DoC for their support and congratulated the people led by Ann who put the time into putting the cases and proposals together getting money through for the various projects.

It was moved that the Treasurer's Annual Report as circulated be accepted (moved Ann Evans, seconded Jenny Rowan) carried.

6. Report from DoC

Matt Barnett on behalf of DoC acknowledged the huge volunteer effort put into the farm again in the past year and said the work on Te Kouka was really fantastic. DoC is very happy with the way things are going notwithstanding a few issues such as security and monitoring of the type and numbers of visitors. People are communicating and keeping each other informed.

Regarding the grazing concession DoC and Greater Wellington Regional Council have selected a preferred party. There will be a single lease for both properties and legal details were still being worked through. DoC will be talking with Guardians about various matters.

Matt advised that an important piece of work is a review of the conservation management strategy going through the consultation phase currently, the first step being consultation with iwi. In May consultation will take place with stakeholders and partners, one of which will be the Guardians. That will give opportunity for people to have a say in how priorities are set up in the Wellington area which will be different from the old way, will be at a higher level and will help guide management plans and decision making in the future.

Ann said the Guardians are very fortunate with the people they deal with in DoC. The fencing around the Ramaroa wetland has been signed off and Ann thanked DoC for that as well as all the support received from DOC staff – and it is hoped another grant from the CCPF will be available to complete the Ramaroa circuit.

7. Election of Trustees

Liffet announced that Rachel Kiel-Taylor would be standing down. Ann presented a gift and noted that Rachel and Leon and others had been involved in thinking about the potential for Whareroa. Without their initial commitment and perseverance in artistic and legal ways Guardians would not be here at an AGM. They had given 12 years of life to Whareroa and were truly thanked for that.

It was noted that three trustees (John Lancashire, Theo Barsanti and Sascha Wassong) terms were due to expire but all three had agreed to stand again.

Nominations were called for the vacancy left by Rachel Kiel-Taylor but there were none.

John Lancashire, Theo Barsanti and Sascha Wassong were re-elected unopposed.

8. Other Business

(a) Liffet announced that since 2015 would be the Guardians' 10th Anniversary Jenny Rowan has invited people to her home on August 22 to celebrate that.

(b) Ann invited people to inspect documents on display that she had put together as a historical record.

(c) **Restoration Day** – Ann noted there were two spaces for Guardians who were interested in attending on 23rd May and to let Liffet or Ann know.

(d) Ann said she had received via email a suggestion that a detailed list of plants in Whareroa be compiled by Pat Enright and Chris Hopkins who would work their way through all the native forest blocks. It would be a valuable resource.

(e) June Rowland commented that the newsletters Ann circulates were very largely responsible for keeping volunteers interested and attending and were invaluable.

(f) **Mountain Bike Track** – Steve reported that not much work had been done as there had been technical difficulty about going through the ECO reserve. The Council understand that they made a mistake and have been helpful in getting the Mountain Bike Club through the process of getting retrospective consent.

He advised that the Club had received a \$30,000 grant from the Transpower Fund so as soon as approvals are received they will be back in full force with volunteers finishing the track off, including bridges. There had been good support from the local community and a really good response to what is already there. Steve said it is a unique opportunity for recreation in the Wellington area because of the breadth of styles and the farm is an important link between Queen Elizabeth Park and the Akatarawas.

Steve thanked the Guardians for their support and commitment to such things as putting out pest traps and plants that have been put in occasionally.

(g) Jenny advised that John Lancashire had managed to secure \$300,000 for ECO work to be done throughout the region. The Friends of QE Park will be the overall managers and Jenny said she had accepted a role to sit on the committee of people on the ground who do all the work. Governance arrangements are now being worked out.

Bob questioned where the money was coming from and was advised it was through the Ministry for the environment and will be announced by Nick Smith.

A vote of confidence was moved in Jenny representing the Guardians on the Committee (moved Jonathan Waterworth, seconded Ann Evans). Carried with acclamation.

(h) Paul advised there had been a meeting of Whareroa Farm, QE Park, Nga Uruora and Paekakariki people to try and get a wider pest control effort. There had been a discussion of what is being done and how things could be done better. One issue was that through the WWF there has been a Moe-based interactive trapping system developed to put all the trap lines in and get all the data together to see what everybody is doing. It will be adopted by others to get the bigger picture.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.00pm.

After a tea break Jenny introduced Jiff Stewart to give a talk entitled "For our Grandchildren's Grandchildren – the Saving of Whareroa".

Jiff spoke of the reason why we need to record the story being so people can go back and look at their histories. The matter had been discussed for a couple of years and it was believed to be of critical importance to get a collection of stories from those who were originally involved in the project. Jiff said she had developed a personal interest and thanked Guardians for picking up the challenge and for the professionalism and care and concern about how the project should be approached. Jiff explained what oral history is all about which is usually to capture a whole life story. Recordings are accompanied by an extract which is called a timed extended index. Every 20 minutes or so there is a timed page. Recordings and extracts will be lodged in the Alexander Turnbull Library, including brief biographical information which is handled very cautiously. Trustees will also have a full copy. It is putting people's memories and the archives together to give a whole picture. Jiff thanked all the people she had already interviewed and recognised the principles the group worked to and the skills of the group.

Jenny spoke of the energy that the land had given people and said people had turned up when they were needed and one of the major ones had been Janet Mason. Jenny thanked Jiff for her most interesting update on the oral history project.