

Whareroa Guardians Community Trust Inc

Minutes of 14th Annual General meeting

held in the Meeting Room at Paraparaumu Library

Present: Liffet Stewart (Acting Chair), Ann Evans, Sue Blaikie, Bruce Bulmer, Ruby Durrant-Bush, Shane Cave, Sandra Rowland, Lynette Francis, Ian Redward, Helen & Tony Griffiths, Bernard McManus, Brian Law, John Wilson, Marilyn Wilson, Sylvia Hill, Sue Campbell, Mic Keith, Liz Morton Hugh & Alison Parsons, Denys Crengle, Jan Nisbet, Dawn Bush.

1. **Apologies:** Rachel Calvert, Sue Blaikie, Andrew Ford, June Rowland

2. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

It was moved that these be accepted as a true and correct record (moved Ann Evans/Liffet Stewart). Carried.

3. **Matters Arising**

No matters arising.

4. **Chairperson's Annual Report**

TRUSTEES: The current trustees are Ann Evans, Sandra Rowland, Bruce Bulmer, Ian Redward, Ruby Durrant-Bush, Liffet Stewart, Lynette Frances and Sue Blaikie. Iwi trustee Carol Reihana. All the trustees are dedicated to and get great satisfaction from their involvement with Whareroa. We appreciate the beauty and personal restoration to be gained by involvement with the land, flora and fauna and the new skills and friendships formed through our involvement. And it keeps us fit!!

There has been a significant development during this year as there will be mass planting of natives on a commercial level. The Billion Trees Project grant of \$300,000 will enable 35 hectares to be planted by Ground Truth above Carex Valley and along the Ti Kouka Ridge to the Rocks. This was mainly due to the hard work of Peter Handford of Ground Truth and the Rotary Forests of Peace & Remembrance Trust working with our previous chair Theo Barsanti and Ann Evans who put in hours of work with applications and attention to detail. There was also the possibility of a grant that would have enabled solar panels to be installed on Whareroa; however, this proposal resulted in a rift in the Guardians' views and the resultant resignation of Theo. His loss is greatly felt, and we are extremely grateful to Theo for his hard work and commitment to Whareroa.

VOLUNTEERS: The hours put in by volunteers every week at Whareroa is amazing! Over the year 3283 hours from 109 volunteers have been put in. This is the equivalent of 1.6 full time workers. There are the regular planting and working bee sessions, track development and mowing, weeding, trapping, manufacture and installation of seats and picnic tables, and working with DOC and the grazier regarding fences and overall monitoring of the farm. In addition, our Facebook profile and internet activities are kept current by ex-trustee Scott in Switzerland. Special mention needs to be made of those who give generously of their time and energy. In particular Dawn Bush who is a faithful minute recorder and blackberry eradicator, Dick Caldwell for his mowing, carpet square cutting and making of benches, Shane Cave and the trapping crew for their persistence in pest destruction, recent volunteer Denys Crengle for his assistance with mowing and fence removal. We were very sad to lose our wonderfully enthusiastic and passionate Penny Redward in January. Her hard work and legacy live on.

BEEHIVES: 2 beehives were established below Matai Bush near the Nikau palms, sadly only one has survived. It is of interest that throughout NZ this year approximately one third of beehives have died which reinforces the importance of maintaining hives and fostering biodiversity. We are very grateful to Ken Armstrong who has been generous with his time and expertise as Liffet, Theo and Peter Davis grapple with the complexities of apiary management.

ORCHARD: The additions to the orchard were 3 citrus trees and numerous swan plants to foster Monarch butterflies this year. People are enjoying helping themselves to the produce in the orchard.

PLANTING: 2200 trees were planted in the last winter season. Planting days are an important time for families to connect with Whareroa. New faces are frequently seen, and it is truly wonderful to see how the process of planting binds people to the area.

WEEDS: Sadly, weeds are an ongoing issue – blackberry, arum lilies, thistles and many others. A \$15,000 DOC grant is helping control blackberry as is the regular weekly volunteer work.

NEW MOWER: Due to a very generous anonymous donation we now have a new lawnmower which has enabled more extensive track maintenance. We are appreciative of the energy and sweat that Richard, Bruce, Bernard, Alexander and Denys put into the mowing. People will not walk in areas where the grass becomes unmanageable.

VANDALISM: Sadly, the caravan has been the recipient of undesirable activity which was very quickly repaired by Richard, Bruce and Shane. The good news is that there has been a significant reduction in vehicle break-ins since the car park was deforested.

FARMING: Whareroa has undergone a huge change this year as the grazier (William Beetham) did not renew his contract. Having been moved on from QE Park it was no longer economically viable to keep stock on Whareroa. Sheep and some cattle are back in residence now as a short-term lease has been granted. It is good to see the rampant grass growth getting under control. But it is sad to see the farmhouse empty and rabbits taking over the lawn.

RECREATION:

Unfortunately, we do not have any monitoring in place to enable us to know how many visitors come to Whareroa, but we know there are thousands! The greatest number are mountain bikers and a further track is currently being created which will attract greater numbers. Walkers, picnickers and family groups are always seen enjoying the space and tranquillity that the open spaces offer. We have school groups coming through the area and many children love repeat visits.

TRAPPING. There are 9 stalwart trappers whose dedication and activities we and the bird life greatly appreciate. A separate trapping report will be attached.

BIRDCOUNTS: Helen Griffiths continues her regular bird count activities and although the numbers do not necessarily reflect the increase in bird numbers, we were elated recently to have a flock of 9 kereru in attendance.

LIZARDS: We know of green geckos' presence near the gums, in Carex valley and on Campbell Mill Road. The potential for a lizard release at the cairn site is getting closer. We now have good food sources established in the area and look forward to noticing scuttling on sunny slopes soon.

XTERRA: For 2 years this competition has been held in Whareroa and those who are involved apparently rave about the area. It is great that top athletes as well as the plodders amongst us find satisfaction in the variety of the terrain. Sadly, the Footsteps of the Marines run/walk will not be happening in 2021 but the Kapiti Joggers and Walkers continue to come to the farm.

LINKS WITH NEIGHBOURING BIODIVERSITY GROUPS: We liaise closely with Kapiti Biodiversity Project and Nga Uruora and share information with Friends of QE Park. Our catchment is their catchment! We look forward to the possibility of Wainui Whenua extending native restoration in South Kapiti.

The wonderful biodiversity and growth of plants at Whareroa has not been affected by COVID, in fact due to lack of international travel we have had an increase of some volunteers' input. We are continually grateful to DOC for the availability of this wonderful green space and look forward to the next 10 years of our journey in partnership with them. In particular, Suzi Tuffin, Robert Ash and Angus Hulme-Moir have been key advocates for us in DOC. Again, thank you to all you volunteers who keep Whareroa recovering and developing. Liffet Stewart, Acting chair.

It was moved that the Chairperson's annual report be accepted (moved Sandra Rowland/seconded Ruby Durrant-Bush). Carried.

5. Trapping Report – Presented by Shane Cave

Successful New Traps

The most significant development of 2020 - 21 has been the acquisition of 15 AT220 automatic resetting traps. Since late December the 15 new traps have caught 31 possums and 18 rats. We have also caught a large number of animals in three earlier prototype versions of the traps acquired in late 2019. They are battery powered and automatically reset multiple times with a small pump dispensing fresh liquid lure at regular intervals. They have an electronic beam as a trigger, so the target animals don't have to do anything physical to activate the trap. We've caught astonishing numbers of possums as well as rats, mustelids (stoats and weasels) mice and a cat. We found 4 possums and 2 rats under one trap over a 4-week period. They are constantly active and the battery (rechargeable using a USB plug and cable) lasts a good length of time. The only thing they don't catch are hedgehogs as the traps are fixed a little off the ground. The old-style DoC box traps continue to catch hedgehogs - this year a lot! The traps are New Zealand designed and made in Whakatane and were paid for by the DoC Community Fund with funds to cover lure for three years.

Low Mustelid Catch

On the Kapiti Coast most mustelids are caught between November and April each year. This year on Whareroa, in keeping with the experience of our neighbouring trappers on QEP and the Paekakariki - Pukerua Bay Escarpment, our mustelid catch is significantly down. The average catch until the current summer has been about **15**, this year we've caught **3**. I have no idea why and any speculation as to the cause of this downturn would be pointless, but it is significant so watch this space next year.

Combined mustelid catch* - November to April

2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 -2020	2020 - 2021
20	11	17	12	14	3

*Weasels and stoats. It should be noted that here in the south west of the North Island the weasel catch significantly outnumbers the stoat catch by about 3 to 1.

Thanks to:

- DoC who continue to supply all the lure for our box traps - thanks especially to David Allen.
- **But most importantly of all,** the trapping team: Shane Williamson, Darrel Sutherland, Brian Solomon, Jason Bohmer, Rodney Hopkirk, John Rowland, Ray Molineux and Tom Bruynel. In addition, thanks also to Scott Hill in Switzerland who maintains our data system and spreads our trapping data far and wide.

6. Treasurer's Annual Report

Lynette presented the report and explained that it is the report that goes to the Charities Commission.

Description and Quantification (the extent practicable) of the Entity's Outputs	Actual	Budget	Actual
	This Year	This Year	Last Year
Newsletters communicating with members and volunteers to maintain workforce availability and motivation (507) on email list	17	14	14
Restoration: Trees planted at planting days	2100	2000	2400
Restoration: Hectares existing planting maintained	24	23	22
Restoration: Trapping Pests killed	526	500	575
Access: Existing tracks maintained	11.5km	11km	10.5km
Access: Amenities installed – 3 seats, "mini-Hut", Old Dunny, 1 stile	6	3	3
Access: Promotion of reserve as public amenity (brochures and maps)	800	1000	1200
Access: New track with signage	800m	300m	300m
Access: New mower (funded by donation)	1		

Additional output measures			
Recorded volunteer hours: 3283 from 109 volunteers NB Additional hours worked by not recorded			
Articles in local newspapers, talks to local service groups promoting the existence and purpose of Whareroa Farm Recreation Reserve			
Community orchard maintained, 3 new fruit trees			
2 Beehives installed			
Social media presence on Nature Space and Facebook promoted and maintained			
The Board approved the release of the Performance Report on 1 February 2021			
Additional information: Covid 19 Lockdown reduced access and the number of working bees hence fewer hours than last year			

It was moved that the Treasurer's Annual Report as circulated be accepted (moved Ann Evans/seconded Ian Redward). Carried.

7. Report from DoC

No formal report from DoC but Ann reported Guardians do have good working relationships with DoC who are very supportive of trapping providing materials as well as weed chemicals. They respond quickly to any concerns and have arranged temporary grazing to reduce fire risk.

8. Election of Trustees

It was noted that the terms of three Trustees (Theo Barsanti, Bruce Bulmer and Ruby Durrant-Bush) were due to expire. Bruce and Ruby were available to stand again. A nomination was received from Liffet Stewart for Rachel Calvert to stand as a Trustee. Rachel had agreed and as there were no further nominees Bruce and Ruby were re-elected and Rachel elected to become a Trustee. *(Moved Ann Evans/Liffet Stewart). Carried.*

9. Other Business

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

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After refreshments Ann called for new ideas for the next 10 years as the initial 10-year plan would expire next year.

Ann then showed a series of photos taken over the last ten years and before the decision was made to save the farm. She outlined where Ground Truth plantings will be taking place and talked about the wetland area to be planted.

Shane asked what the prospects were for grazing and reported that the current grazier Brent was interested in taking on a grazing licence.

Jan suggested making tracks along Main Ridge and up Mamaku Valley. She also liked the idea of being able to walk anywhere over the whole area as it is nice to have open spaces as well as being completely enclosed in forest.

More beehives were suggested, also a vineyard but it was explained that would require a very long-term concession with DoC.

More forest walks to bring young people in.

Liffet said she liked art work such as the caravan and would like to see more. She said farming would now never be allowed on QE Park except possibly grazing on the west side and in the northern block.

Helen considered it better to have half the land grazed and liked to see animals grazing. Jan explained the difference between a farming licence and a grazing licence.

Bruce explained a survey had been carried out on boundary fences and said it would need many thousands of dollars to repair them. He thought the farm would eventually be retired as the fencing costs would be huge.

These ideas will be considered further over the next year, in discussion with DOC.

Thanks were expressed to all who attended and contributed.