

August 2016 LB Report – Judy Gilbert

Attended local board meetings and workshops held on 3, 4, 8, 9, 15, 22 and 24 August.

Office day on 1st Aug.

Other Meetings

29 July – Ecology Conversation Artists workshop – Two other participants and I met with Shirley Johnson and Marie McEntee to explore ideas about art and ecology as part of the Ecology Visioning process. A number of suggestions were for things that the local board already has in action, such as view shafts, and it is somewhat disturbing how little people know about what projects the local board initiates and supports in an ongoing way. I felt this workshop was of limited value to the Ecology Conversation with just one artist present and my concern that there is not enough focus on how we protect the ecology of the island into the future was well founded.

4 Aug – Community procurement meeting – this well attended meeting signalled a real change in the culture of council procurement for Infrastructure. There are 69 sites managed on Barrier including 49 parks. There are three options proposed for how future contracts, from July 2017, will be managed – status quo, one island business or groups that manages all island contracts and subcontracts, or a council employee based on island whose job it is to managed local contracts. A bit of a return in thinking to past management styles for local contracts. Many potential contractors filled out expression of interest (EOI) forms giving council a good list of local businesses and relevant skills.

5 Aug – Glenfern Sanctuary - meeting with Sue, Izzy and Emma Cronin to discuss future plans for Glenfern.

11/12 Aug – Environmental Defence Society (EDS) - Wild Places Conference – Thank you for the opportunity to attend this conference. The conference was well organised and a raft of speakers on a range of Wild Places presented followed by with informative and interesting panel discussions. My key concern with the conference was the focus on increasing our tourist numbers from 1 to 4 million over the next few years – I would have thought EDS would be resisting that impact both nationally and in terms of climate change. Report attached.

In the conference, as Sue has mentioned from last year's EDS Conference– the issue of the spread of wilding pines was highlighted. While we do not have such an iconic landscape as the McKenzie Country, we do have wilding pine spreading rapidly over regenerating farmland here. These trees outgrow our native species and completely change the flora of the surrounding area. I would like to see an **Aotea Wilding Pine Project** established through the local board as part of our environmental initiatives.

A project scope could be developed by Environmental Services starting with an assessment of the spread of wilding pines on the island using mapping. A local project coordinator could be engaged to promote the wilding pine project and to contact relevant landowners about their willingness to engage in a programme of wilding pine removal. A programme of prioritised removal relevant to ecological significance could then be drawn up and as funding allows an area at a time could be treated. Minimal cost to start - \$2000-\$4000 – to engage a local coordinator.

17/18/19 Aug – Sanctuaries of NZ conference – Hamilton. An excellent conference put on by Landcare Research for all the sanctuaries in NZ. Presented on the local board supported Goodnature Project and the locally designed Econode trap minder project in Mulberry Grove.

26 Aug – Bring Back Kokako community meeting – this well attended community meeting at the new Department of Conservation (DoC) office in Okiwi was led by Noelene Ngawaka and featured Ian Flux, an ecologist, who specialises in kokako recovery. Ian had three presentations – one about kokako, one about current pest management methods, and a third about where in the Te Paparahi kokako could be returned to – he had mapped a potential 2000HA area north of the Maybes property boundary taking in the last two known kokako territories. Ian’s role is to write a feasibility study on the project with an initial investigation into the current food supply. There was a strong emphasis throughout the meeting on community input and participation to the project. One of the key decisions to be made is whether to make the project just focus on kokako or to have an ecosystem approach as the approach and management will be different for each. Darren Peters and Pieter Tuinder from DoC were also present. Took a moment to update Darren on the Goodnature Project.

Projects and Issues worked on:

Rental Housing ‘Crisis’ – discussions with Sue Eves (AFSG) further to our investigation into a potential site for long term rental . She had contacted a range of potential clients but none of these worked out. Back to square one.

Reporting the Local Board’s Environmental Projects – wrote an article for the Barrier Bulletin for September publication.

Information Pack for New Island Residents – put together a list of potential items for such a pack and circulated to local board members. Talked with Chris Knight about what issues new people comment on and added to the list. There are good numbers of sales of property on island currently, more so than for any winter in the last five years. Prospective purchasers are now looking more at sections and new builds as the number of options for developed sites is reduced. Started on a draft welcome letter for the pack.

Community Art – ‘Abundance’ piece various conversations towards getting the detail of installation and siting sorted. A picture of the piece and its proposed location has been up for 6 weeks now in the foyer of the Mulberry Grove Café - only positive feedback so far for both the art and the plan for the Bay. Visited Shane Anderson to discuss engineering requirements – he believes once the creative design is complete then it will need to go to a structural engineer for final input. We have the go ahead from Auckland Transport (AT) to install the piece as discussed on the Mulberry Grove foreshore.

Shoal Bay Wharf Community Noticeboard – this is underway with Envirokiwi – positioning will be interesting with the green shed no longer present. As an interim measure it could go up under the shelter on the wharf.

Shoal Bay Pontoon – ongoing correspondence with Gareth Willis, AT, regarding their agreement to come back to the board with the options for upgrading and keeping the pontoon. It is unlikely we will have a decision this month but we will be updated at the next business meeting.

Community Grants - Overdue Accountability Reports – followed up with Te Taurahere O Aotea report due in 2013. Sue Whaanga will complete this.

Aotea Upcycling Centre – working with AoteaOra Community Trust and Council to get this facility contract signed off and the infrastructure in place. Eight people applied for the job to manage the facility, five were interviewed with Possi Whaanga being appointed. Council has still to get the Resource Consent to operate. We are trolling our way through leases, OSH plans, contracts, and insurance. The goal is to open on 1 October.

Highlights

Welcome Signs up and looking good with so far only positive feedback. What a marathon – the first communication with sign creator Jeremy Taine to initiate the project was in March 2014. It was nice to have the Okiwi sign make the front cover of the Bulletin. A letter of thanks, pictures of the signs up, and a copy of the Bulletin cover has been sent to Jeremy. Bottles of bubbly to follow.

Aotea UpCycling Centre – there is a lot of community interest and excitement about this facility.

Lowlights

Council simply does not deliver on its promises - community volunteers are really taxed to ensure things like granted funding actually arrives and in the case of the Upcycling Facility that they stick to what they agreed to provide.

Wild Places – Environmental Defence Society (EDS) Conference Report to Great Barrier Local Board

10-11 August 2016

I found this conference really disturbing.

Despite Environmental Defence Society (EDS) being the supposed leading environmental group there was no leadership at all on the biggest threat to our Wild Places which is climate change. Not only are our Wild Places already being subjected to change in fauna and flora due to the climate change effects like extreme weather and changing temperatures but regional and national budgets are going to get increasingly sucked up with the likes of cleaning up after floods and landslides, loss of production from droughts, and re-routing roads as they go underwater. This year we have seen such impacts all over the world.

And yet, this conference focussed on promoting the utilisation of the increasing tourist \$ to protect our wild places and conservation in general. Tourists that are all going to fly here. The global warming impact of aviation currently is estimated at 5% of global climate pollution. The tourism and airline sector at the conference focussed on increasing our tourism numbers from 1 million to 4 million per annum as if aviation pollutants (for which no-one pays) and climate change didn't exist.

And of course, every other country has the same agenda, more tourists increasing the number of flights exponentially, and so we go on taxing our planet.....which will lead to its demise unless we act now.

The discussion generally was aimed at growth – more tourists and more infrastructures (toilets and the like) to support them. Have they not got it that the world economy is driven by massive consumption requiring massive extraction and the basic reason the planet is in trouble? Any leading environmental group, in my view, should be questioning a decrease in tourism numbers and asking for a slowdown in the numbers of people and goods being moved about the planet at such cost. Only one slide in the entire conference addressed climate change –it showed the rapidly escalating levels of CO2 in the atmosphere. No mention that our Wild Places may be underwater, or in oceans so acidified that life there no longer exists, or oceans so warm that species have moved elsewhere to temperatures that suit them, or that both plant and animal pests may well benefit from climate change putting even more pressure on our less quickly evolving native species.

The overused and now almost meaningless word 'sustainable' was liberally sprinkled through most presentations yet nowhere linked to that meaning 'making better use of what we have' – it simply cloaked 'growth and business as usual' in a warm blanket.

We are not seeing meaningful Political leadership on this matter from anywhere and are not likely to while the corporate world 'owns' democracy and so called Conservation groups sell out for the \$. The only way to get traction on actively reversing climate change is for every individual to slow down or stop excessive levels of consumption, travel less, and act local - support the local economy (keep the \$ in NZ), grow our own food or support local food production, recycle, and share resources creatively in community.

The buck stops with every one of us and this no expense spared (imported out of season watermelon?) Conference completely missed the opportunity to start that korero.

Judy Gilbert
Great Barrier Local Board

The last word.....

Three years ago when I stood for the Local Board I promised the Community I would be approachable, energetic, committed, and capable of making a difference. I told the Community I would bring cooperation, initiative, experience, knowledge, job creation ability, communication, networking, and public speaking to the Board position.

At this end of my term, I feel like I have had to run a marathon to be all that I said I would be and to continue to manage the Windy Hill Sanctuary and chair the AoteaOra Community Trust at the same time.

I believe I have delivered, and some. This has only been possible because of the exemplary support from our Local Board services team – John, Jacqui, Guia, and Dilly. You people have been a pleasure to work with and I have at all times felt 100% supported. For someone who likes to work at the pace I do, your timely responsiveness to my many requests has been a gift. Thank you, John, for the way in which you have approached the times I have needed gently bringing into line. Thank you for your impartial, objective view of the Board and how we operate together.

To Izzy, Chris, Jeff, and Sue – I am proud to have been part of this Board.

I have so enjoyed the many laughs we have had as we carved our way through the plethora of Council business. I believe that all of us truly have Aotea's community at heart and have brought our very diverse characters together to work surprisingly cooperatively. There have been times of challenge and difference but in almost all cases we have agreed to disagree and gotten on with the business.

Our projects are only achieved by working and supporting each other as a team. I am especially pleased with the following:

- Job creation – over the last three years we have created new jobs through Council and community groups for such things as running events, carrying out research, monitoring freshwater, managing community projects, and building and maintaining tracks. Jobs are the cornerstone of our local economy and bring meaning and purpose to people lives – their importance can never be underestimated.
- Building an inclusive community – the formation of a data base of on and off island email contacts has been the platform for the E-news. This is now sent regularly to over 500 recipients. Our part time residents can now be informed about our on island activities, projects, and events and there has been much positive feedback to this communication initiative. There will be reciprocation for recognising part time residents as part of our community in the form of their expertise and resource given to community projects in the future.
- Environment - the appreciation of our most precious toanga – our environment – through grants, projects, and the current Ecology Conversation. This conversation is still in its early phases and has a long way to go as the community strives to address the issue of how we look after our ecology. As the focus comes on to Aotea in the context of Predator Free NZ and the recent MOU between Council and DOC, this community conversation will grow in its significance.

Thank you for the many opportunities you have given me to share my knowledge and experience of Windy Hill Sanctuary and to partner the Board/Council in new initiatives like the Goodnature trap. I hope that you will have gained a much deeper understanding of pest dynamics and the huge challenges our native species face from our many conversations.

- Community Art – I am passionate about the fledgling programme for showcasing our local art in public spaces. The upliftment, or challenge, that art brings on a daily basis is a thread in our community – it's a rare home that does not have even a small piece of locally made art.
- Changing the community conversation – I have enjoyed being the LB 'scribe' in terms of writing articles about the LB projects and promoting the community benefits. This also extends to the many conversations whereby the time is taken to give the facts or background to move people off outdated and incorrect views of Council. Communication is definitely our greatest challenge. Keep the Sounding Board going!
- The Welcome Signs – what an exercise in tenacity! They are lovely examples of locally designed 'art' and of all the signs on the island have had the most community input. I think it is a basic to Welcome people, to let them know where they are, and to state the key pieces of information we want them to pick up in passing. Time to focus now on removing old and unnecessary signage.
- The purchase of Glenfern Sanctuary – Following initial input from me on the plight of Glenfern, Izzy ardently championed the cause from there to a great outcome. This is a personal achievement for me on behalf of Tony.
- The Off the Grid event and Website – great on all levels for local people.

I have, for the most part, thoroughly enjoyed being a Local Board member. Being somewhat curious in nature, it has been great to know so much about what is going on and how it all works. I will miss that.

The democratic process is a slow and expensive beast especially within the context of a huge bureaucracy. For all that this has sometimes driven me crazy, I cannot see a better way of delivering on our community needs and aspirations in a way that matters to most people.

See you in public forum!

Kindest regards

Judy