

It's great to be back...thanks for any support during the elections.

I've attended all the meetings and workshops as required and will report here just on the things I have done separately.

Saturday 12th November

Opening Event for the Harataonga Walkway. A great achievement for all the contractors, staff and board members who have worked on this fantastic coastal walk. The actual event was a success too, in spite of rain and wind on the day. The fact that the local contractors independently installed a beautiful seat at the northern end dedicated to the extraordinary track making skills of Stan McGeady is testament to many things...local contractors have excellent skills and they will go the extra mile when moved to. Local contracting shows value beyond cost.

Monday 14th November

Mulberry Grove Playground Renewal meeting. This playground is next for renewal and so stakeholders met to discuss the opportunity. The preference is for a structure that challenges senior children (ages 8-13) in the form of a circuit with lots of upper-body elements. It will have a coastal theme in the design and blend in with the environment. Opportunities to recycle the old structure will be included. Final design is not decided yet but the project is expected to proceed smoothly.

Wednesday 16th November

GBI Historic Heritage Survey meeting. Izzy and I met briefly with the team so that we had faces to names and a clear understanding of their plans. This is a board-funded project to undertake a "Level 1 Historic Heritage Survey of Great Barrier Island". While the scope does not cover the marine environment we were told that Dive Magazine articles encourage divers to take souvenirs from shipwrecks e.g. Wiltshire, while there are still bits to take. Perhaps the board should write to the magazine, or will that make it worse?

Thursday 24th November.

Waste Champions meeting at Orla's place. Joanne O'Reilly, our Waste Educator, set this up to hear about action on the ground and to hear what their aspirations are for the island.

Monday 24th November.

Shoal Bay Pontoon meeting. Izzy and I attended this along with Pete Ganley, Phil Judd, Roger Bright (Coastguard), Auckland Transport (AT) representatives and STF Contractors (maintenance contractors). The meeting was to discuss the removal of the recreational pontoon due to its unsafe condition and to find solutions for wharf users until a replacement pontoon is sorted. This was an extremely good meeting in that all parties worked respectfully to find solutions and agree them. I was very proud of our local boys and of the AT reps. Good job everyone. Of course, it's not all done yet...

Monday 19th December

Dark Skies Sanctuary Event at the Barleyman cottage. This was an opportunity to hear from Margaret Munro, CEO Earth-Sky Tekapo, about what their Dark Sky status has done for Tekapo. About 25 people attended from both ends of the island, some very serious interest out there. We heard about how the enterprise started in 2004 at the Mt John Observatory which was built in the 1960s, and now operates as a scientific research outpost to the public. Staggering figures were given...four full-time astro-photographers on the staff of 61 paid employees, they have a café on the top, bus drivers, guides, office staff, two observatories, four languages are used, 168 visitors are guided each night broken into language groups...it goes on. Of course, the relationship with universities and the existing observatory are key elements to this venture, but it is a new business started by a couple of entrepreneurs and it has grown due to an immense local effort. They have recently formed a 50/50 partnership with Ngai Tahu to build an astronomy centre on the shores of the lake. The event concluded with some good advice for our group and a valuable Q & A session (and refreshments!). Well done, Gendie Somerville-Ryan.

Tuesday 20th December

Monthly Motu Kaikoura Trust meeting in Auckland. Significant news from this group is that the November monitoring for rats came in at 4% and that the lodge rebuild has been selected as the project to be delivered as part of a course provided by SGA (Strahan Group Architects) and Architecture + Women NZ. Minutes of this meeting will be attached once they are approved at the February meeting.

Wednesday 1st February

Biosecurity meeting with Jeremy Warden to catch up on the status of our projects.

Friday 3rd February

Parks Projects site visits with Izzy.

1. Mulberry Grove Stone Wall Restoration – met with Patrick Thorpe (project manager), Thomas Daly (Envirokiwi) and Ally Gibbs (Principal, MG School) to confirm details and help with the handover to Patrick from Gary.
2. Whangaparapara Interpretation Project – Jan Ramp from Snapper Graphics came along to meet the locals and hear their thoughts for some historic interpretation for this area. We met in the newly renovated wharf shed and discussed the idea to tell the industrial history of the area (briefly!) on panels that could go on the interior walls between the nogs. There will also be an installation at Oreville Stamper Battery on the main road out.
3. Gooseberry Flat Sanctuary Reserve – we met with locals here again to discuss how this area might be better protected for birds (pateke, penguins, dotterel, oystercatchers) with some appropriate signage about the habitat and about how dogs must be controlled.

Besides those meetings I have had numerous discussions around the place about the dog bylaws but no evidence (yet) of any behaviour worse than cats. There has been an immense amount of action at the Tip-Shop and also the Op-Shop, and lots of people have seemed keen to add value to the scene.

The Marine Spatial Plan is out... get reading everyone!

Getting around the island this season has been both a nightmare and a pleasure. It's always a shock to be so busy so suddenly with visitors but it is fantastic to see so much happy economic action locally. All providers that I have come across have been delighted to be so busy and for the visitors to be such a good lot. I think our stores have done us proud, they have been well stocked in spite of freight limits, and they are almost all becoming leaders in the waste minimisation journey.

Happy New Year and ... it's great to be back!

Sue