



Minutes of the Newtown Resident's Association Meeting, 7.30pm 16th August 2021 at Newtown Hall, 71 Daniell St.

Present: Rhona Carson (Chair) Steve Cosgrove (Minutes), Jane Patterson, Hilary Watson, Stephen Pritchard, Ann Devoy, David Jenkins, Michelle Wolland, Jan Gould, Kevin Lethbridge, Joyce Gibson, Patrick Morgan, Martin Hanley, Jill Ford, Jo Ellen Duckor, Don McDonald, Warwick Taylor, Penny Sturgess, Carol Comber, Sam Somers, Léonie Walker.

Apologies: Kassie McLuskie, Margaret Franklin.

Guests : Brian Dawson (representing MP Paul Eagle), Councillors Laurie Foon and Fleur Fitzsimons; Researcher Yiwen Lui; Musician and events producer James Cotterill.

Rhona welcomed everyone and outlined a packed agenda.

Research participants sought: Yiwen addressed the meeting, describing his PhD research looking at engagement of ethnic communities in community planning processes. He is seeking participants for his focus groups, and would appreciate his contact details being shared as appropriate.

Spatial Plan process and outcome: Cr Laurie Foon acknowledged that for many at the meeting, the vote and the outcome were not as we would have preferred. She would be happy to meet with people who wish to discuss this further, and people should feel free to email Councillor Laurie Foon <laurie.foon@wcc.govt.nz> or Councillor Fleur Fitzsimons <Fleur.Fitzsimons@wcc.govt.nz>

Climate change: Patrick Morgan presented a thought provoking sequence summarising the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest stark report [<https://www.ipcc.ch/>]: It's warming; It's us; We're sure; It's bad; We can fix it. He then led a discussion related to the steps we could take as individuals and as a community in response to the report, outlining how climate change is now indisputable, and that actions are needed NOW to avert irreversible damage that would threaten sea level rise, increasing extreme weather events (fire, drought, floods etc).

The meeting shared ideas for reducing their contribution to climate change, as individuals and collectively. Individual actions included composting, recycling, insulation, more active transport, less fossil fuel use, buying locally sourced and sustainably produced goods, and community actions included advocacy for gardens on roofs, better insulated housing, community solar sharing schemes, better infrastructure for car sharing, e-car and e-bike charging, community composting (see later), more carpooling and working from home type initiatives.

The question was raised of how those without off-street parking can charge an EV. Note that the Council has plans for another 30 public charging parks: <https://wellington.govt.nz/news-and-events/news-and-information/our-wellington/2021/07/ev-fast-chargers>

Wellington Residents Coalition request: Warwick (in his capacity as a member of Wellington Residents Coalition) had written to the Residents' Association saying that the Coalition would like to work with the Newtown Residents' Association in the areas of housing, water and rates, and asked for volunteer to attend joint meetings. The Coalition is opposed to water metering and asked if the Association would be signatories to a petition about this. Discussion (both by email among the Association Executive and at the meeting) revealed a diversity of views on this, so we could not at this point agree on a blanket motion to oppose water metering. We did agree to send representatives and work with the Coalition on the housing and rates elements, and to support education campaigns to conserve water. See link to excellent radio NZ piece on water reforms: The Detail: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/the-detail/story/2018806009/why-the-government-s-muscling-in-on-the-water-business>

Laura Rosier history book: Martin H shared the news that the Laura Rosier history book on the built history of Newtown is essentially complete! He had printed out the first five chapters for people to look at. More work is underway sourcing permissions for the use of some photographs for the book, as it is unclear from the records whether this was done originally.

Wellington City Council Consultation: The council is asking for feedback from the community about safety improvements at the Russell Terrace, Riddiford Street, Mansfield Street and Rhodes Street intersection. (Due 30th September.) This led to discussion about renewing the call to reduce speeds further in parts of Newtown to improve safety.

WCC Engagement about the District Plan: WCC Engagement Officer Clare Lundon has emailed about this, and is seeking to engage with residents on its content. The first draft of the plan is expected by the end of October. There was discussion about meaningful engagement, including a wide range of community members. Some questions suggested that given the feedback and considerable effort so far contributed by NRA members that did not appear to have influenced decisions, that a degree of submission fatigue and cynicism about processes of "engagement" is evident.

Don asked for support from the meeting about two issues: he has complained to NZTA about an offensive number plate that he had spotted in Newtown – M1XSUX. Translated as 'my ex sucks' this is insulting to the owner's partner. A number of attendees agreed and were willing to support Don with this complaint. He also asked for support in his offer to donate a copy of his photo essay book to Newtown library. A copy of the book was circulated, and certainly is a fascinating photographic record of Newtown's colourful characters!

Community composting: Martin H informed the meeting that Kai Cycle have a new community composting scheme available for people in Newtown. Residents without the facilities to home compost can pay a fee to deposit material in a locked wheelie bin at Carrara Park - subscribers will have the code to unlock, and instructions about acceptable materials. The actual compost bin will be in Martin's garden and a compost manager from Kai Cycle will ensure that the compost will be properly managed and will not generate fly problems. People can also opt to have compost collected by Kai Cycle for somewhat larger fee. This scheme could be expanded if other people are willing to host the compost bins. Composting reduces methane emissions from land fill and contributes to soil fertility.

Community Gardening: Steve C. has been trying to generate interest in the Carrara Park garden via Facebook – plenty of readers but little success in attracting volunteers – though there has been an offer to teach people basics of food gardening. Signage will be put up to encourage interest. The soil needs to be re-tested for toxins given the importation of topsoil from elsewhere, and WCC will attend to this. There has also been a request from WCC to support a city-wide Community Gardens open day on Saturday 27th November.

Mental Health Awareness week free music festival: James Cotterill, a musician and music events producer, outlined his plans for a free music festival (12pm to early evening) in Carrara Park on the 2nd of October (Mental Health week). He has a line up of artists willing to contribute, and the plans so far include activities for children, food and music. Rhona proposed using the Neighbours' Day funding to support the event perhaps by members volunteering their time and donating the cost of port-a-loos for the event. This was unanimously approved.

Moved Warwick / Martin; That the Association's Neighbours Day fund be used to support the Mental Health Awareness Festival. Passed unanimously.

The meeting also supported being part of the Community Gardens Open Day.

Meeting finished at 9.03pm.