



The President's Report to the 2022 Annual General Meeting, 19th September 2022:

A brief outline of the main Newtown Residents' Association activities during the financial year from July 2021 till June 2022, with additional notes about activities from then until the present.

July 2021

At the July meeting

- There was discussion of the Spatial Plan decisions, and of the upcoming District Plan consultation. We were troubled by the WCC councillor's decisions made on June 24th to increase the 'walkable catchments' to 15mins for NPS-UD intensification rules to enable 6storey developments, and to reduce the Character Precincts from the Officer recommended 50% of the current extent back to the much smaller area in the original Draft Spatial Plan.
- We discussed the formation of an umbrella group to 'promote density done well', The meeting agreed to support this group. It has now formed as LIVEWellington.
- We agreed to make a submission on the development of the Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development (GPS-HUD). This submission was made on July 30th.
- Discussed the future of the now-closed Newtown Workingmens' Bowling Club, on Town Belt Land in Owen St - the meeting supported the continued mixed community use of the land and buildings.

August 2021

We made a submission about the WCC Trading and Events in Public Places Policy.

At the August meeting

- Patrick Morgan led a discussion about climate change and the steps we could take as individuals and as a community.
- We received a request from the Wellington Residents Coalition: The coalition would like to work with the Newtown Residents' Association in the areas of housing, water and rates. We agreed to send a representative, but noted that there are differing views in our membership on the desirability of water metering.
- Martin Hanley had copies of the first print out from the Laura Rosier History of Newtown.
- James Cottrell, 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). Rhona proposed using unspent Neighbours' Day funding to support the event, and this was unanimously approved. The next day the country went into lock down and this concert was postponed – it was finally held in May 2022.

September 2021

We were in Level 2 lockdown, and it was quite a quiet month apart from the 2021 AGM, which was held on September 20th.

This was the first meeting at the new venue of the St Thomas's and City Mission's Community Lounge. We have been able to use this free of charge and we are very grateful to the Church and the Mission for this.

October 2021

The push for Covid 19 vaccinations was on, with 'Super Saturday' being held on October 16th at Newtown School.

We began to discuss a number of major consultations - the Draft District Plan, Cycleways and LGWM were all coming up for community consultation between November 2nd and December 14th

November 2021

LIVEWellington, first discussed in July, was launched. Our Association agreed to fund the PA system for the launch, and Sam Somers recorded it.

At the Residents' Association meeting on Monday 15th November we had a presentation from the WCC Cycleways planning team about the proposed Bike Path from Newtown to Waitangi Park.

We also discussed the proposed 'Traffic Light System' for managing Covid !9.

December 2021

We made submissions to WCC

-approving of the proposals for a Bike Path Network but asking to be included in discussions as the details are worked out.

- a submission about the Draft District Plan – again asking for consideration of the Newtown housing plan crafted by Red Design, and expressing concern about the effect on existing housing if the majority of residential Newtown is opened to developments of up to 6 storeys.

There was no meeting in December, or in January – which was an uneventful month for the Association.

February 2022

Funding of \$1.5 million for developing the site of the Workingmens' Bowling Club was proposed by Crs Laurie Foon and Fleur Fitzsimons, and was agreed by Councillors at a meeting on Feb 3rd.

By the time of the meeting on 21st February the country was under 'red light' conditions and we held our meeting via Zoom. Covid cases were climbing sharply and we discussed issues around keeping safe.

It had been decided that Newtown Festival would need to be cancelled for 2022, initially because of the impossibility of restricting attendance to an event in the street to people with vaccine passes. In the end the move to the Red level of the Covid Safety Framework meant that all Festivals and similar events were cancelled.

March 2022

Again there was a Zoom meeting on March 21st. Rachel Bolstad talked about organising a successful 'plogging' (Picking up Litter while JOGGING) outing on March 6th, picking up rubbish on Newtown streets. There was a general discussion about the history of the Association's support for Keep Newtown Clean (now discontinued), and how Plogging could be made a regular event.

Further discussion of proposals for the future use of the ex-bowling club in Owen St - a meeting was held on site, organised by ReBicycle, of a number of community groups (including our Association) who discussed potential future uses. Attendees at that meeting noted that there were other members of the community not represented and were looking into how to facilitate wider representation.

April 2022

Another Zoom meeting. The main issues in April were WCC consultations

- Update from the WCC Cycle Team about the transitional bike path from Mein St to the city
- WCC Economic Wellbeing Strategy
- WCC 2022-23 Annual Plan – with two major changes from the Longterm Plan that Council wanted feedback about – the future funding of Council housing and the future of the Southern Landfill.

May 2022

James Cottrell's concert to promote Mental Health Awareness 'Wiggle for Wellbeing', first talked about in August 2021, finally happened in Carrara Park on May 14th. Our Association supported this by organising a free BBQ. Most of the food was donated by New World Newtown, and Jared Corston from WCC was a great help, sourcing the actual BBQ and spending the day cooking. Several Association members assisted with preparing food, and helping with cooking and serving. The whole event was a great success.

The Association meeting on May 16th was the first 'in person' meeting for the year. We had a presentation by Kate Collyns, the community champion at Wellington and Hutt Valley Community Law for the Alcohol Harm Reduction Project.

June 2022

The main topic at the meeting on June 20th was a presentation from Daran Ponter, Chair of the Greater Wellington Regional Council, on Let's Get Wellington Moving, and in particular on the potential impact of Mass Rapid Transit through Newtown.

Alistair Henshaw – Predator Free Wellington, described plans for more intensive pest eradication in Newtown.

The Proposed District Plan was voted on by the WCC Pūroro Āmua/ Planning and Environment Committee on June 23rd. There was approval for most of the final Draft Plan, but a couple of welcome surprises – a motion to give open space parks added protection from shading passed narrowly, with support from Cr Laurie Foon, and agreement to reduce the 'walkable catchments' to 10mins instead of 15 mins.

That concludes the detailed report on the July 2021-June 2022 year.

The months from July to September have had two major themes –

- discussions and submission writing about the Proposed District Plan. The Association's submission, echoing all previous submissions we have made on the topic, went in on September 12th.
- The Local Body Elections. We had a Meet the Candidates meeting for the Greater Wellington Regional Council candidates on Tuesday 13th September, and there will be one for the Paekawakawa/Southern Ward and Te Whanganui-a-Tara Māori Ward candidates on Monday 26th September.

I also congratulate Executive member Sam Somers, who has put an immense amount of effort and skill into conducting a series of 'Its in the Ballot' meetings for election candidates right through the Wellington Region. This format is for live meetings, which are broadcast on a number of platforms.

Other Activities during the 2021-2022 year

Wellington South Community Liaison Group

I have continued as the Association's representative at the monthly Wellington South Community Liaison Group meetings, organised in turn by the coordinators at the Newtown Community and Cultural Centre, the Berhampore Community Centre and the Island Bay Community Centre. I value the community connections that have been established through being part of this group.

Wellington Residents' Associations Network – WRAN

Representatives of several Residents' Associations have been meeting via Zoom since April 2020, during the first lockdown. This started as a weekly meeting but has been monthly, on the last Monday of a month, since late 2020. I have been attending, and the discussion is about issues of shared concern.

Acknowledgements

Our Association has benefitted from the generosity of a number of organisations. I particularly want to thank St Thomas's Church and Wellington City Mission for the use of the Community Lounge for our meetings; the Wellington South Corps of the Salvation Army for hosting our Meet the Candidates Meetings in September; and New World Newtown for their continued support of community events.

Wellington City Council Support

I am pleased to acknowledge the Council's continuing support of the Newtown Residents' Association.

Conclusion

I have now been President for seven years, and have continued to find it an interesting and satisfying activity. I am very grateful to all the Executive members and to everyone who has assisted the Association, by helping with events, responding to emails, contributing to submissions, attending meetings, and in many other ways.

Rhona Carson**President.****18th September 2022**