



The President's Report to the 2023 Annual General Meeting, 18th September 2022:

A brief outline of the main Newtown Residents' Association activities, and other milestones for Newtown, during the financial year from July 2022 till June 2023, with additional notes about activities from then until the present.

July 2022

WCC engagement on the Proposed District Plan opened this month. Submissions on the PDP, firstly to WCC and later to the series of hearings conducted by the independent panel of resource management commissioners, have continued throughout the year.

Discussions and consultations about the future of the former Workingmen's Bowling Club have also been a continuing theme through the year. A loose grouping of local individuals and organisations began meeting as the Owen St Project, and Jane Patterson represented our Association on this group. The Sustainability Trust obtained grant funding for wider community consultation, and Ann Cunningham was appointed as facilitator at the beginning of July. A series of meetings with the group, and with WCC, followed over the next several months.

The new Mural at Network Newtown/ Newtown Library was opened on July 25th. This had been in discussion since 2020, it was great to see it finally in place.

August 2022

On August 11th Wellington City Council gave Absolutely Positively Wellingtonian awards to 17 people, 3 of them for their work in the Newtown Community, and I was honoured to be one of them. I was recognised primarily for contributions to the Newtown Residents' Association and Newtown Festival; Murray Edridge as the City Missioner at Wellington City Mission; and Tom Law for his long record of involvement and service to many community organisations. Tom is of course a past President of our Association. He's currently Co-chair of the Newtown Community and Cultural Centre Trust Board, on the Smart Newtown Committee, and Chairperson of the Wellington South Community Patrol.

In August Association members were busy planning for activities to take place in September. This included the purchase of 10 'grabbers', used to pick up rubbish at Clean Up events.

September 2022

The first installment of the 2022 AGM was on 9th September. There was a small attendance, and a number of the Executive members were absent, for a variety of reasons, including myself as President and Michelle Wolland, the Treasurer. However the meeting was ably chaired by Vice President Jane Patterson, and the meeting was able to proceed apart from receiving the Treasurer's Report. The AGM was then adjourned until the Residents' Association meeting on October 17th.

The Association's submission on the Proposed District Plan, echoing all previous submissions we have made on the topic, went to WCC on September 12th.

We had two Meet the Candidates Meetings for the Local Body Elections at the Salvation Army Hall, and we are grateful to TSA for hosting these. One was for the Greater Wellington Regional Council candidates on Tuesday 13th September, facilitated by Patrick Morgan – thank you Patrick! The other was for the Paekawakawa/Southern Ward and Te Whanganui-a-Tara Māori Ward candidates on Monday 26th September, and I am grateful to Robin Payne and Sadie Coe for facilitating this meeting.

And on September 23rd there was a Clean up Newtown Event organised jointly by the Wellington Hospital Sustainability Advisor and Rachel Bolstad, on behalf of the Association. This was a Keep New Zealand Beautiful Clean Up Week event. Unfortunately it was a very wet day. We continued regardless, but understandably there was a low turn out of volunteers.

October 2022

The WCC and GWRC election results were announced mid-October. We farewelled Fleur Fitzsimons, who retired as Councillor for the Paekawakawa/Southern Ward, and welcomed Laurie Foon and Nureddin Abdurahman as our representatives for 2022-2025. We also congratulated Association member Yadana Saw on her election to the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

At the October meeting the main topic was an extensive discussion with WCC Officer Renée Corlett about the resumed development of the Newtown to the waterfront cycleway. We then moved on to complete the 2022 AGM.

November 2022

Discussions about the former Workingmen's Bowling Club continued, and there was an on-site meeting between the Owen St project group and Council staff on 11th November.

Our November meeting was a celebratory one. We formally welcomed Cr Nuredden Abdurahman and GWRC Cr Yadana Saw, and they each spoke of their backgrounds and thoughts for their new roles. Deputy Mayor Laurie Foon had also been invited but her new role had required her to apologise for our meeting to preside over a Citizenship Ceremony. I was then delighted to award an Honorary Life Membership Certificate to Peter Frater, in recognition of his long contribution to the Newtown and Berhampore communities. The meeting concluded with supper.

December 2022, January 2023

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

February 2023

Our first meeting for 2023 was on February 20th. We congratulated Deputy Mayor Laurie Foon on her new role, as she had been unable to attend our November meeting. We also heard from Mariana Esquivel, the Wellington Connector for Neighbours Aotearoa, about plans for 2023.

The Commissioners' Hearings on the Proposed District Plan started this month and I made an oral submission on Stream 1 – Strategic Direction on February 23rd.

March 2023

Newtown Festival was on March 5th, and again was a great success. The Association no longer organises the Festival but I have a separate role as Festival Administrator, and many other members are also involved in other ways.

The second stream of PDP Hearings, on the Residential Zones started on March 28th, and Steve Dunn and I spoke on March 31st about the need for sunlight protection in Carrara Park. There could be excessive shading, particularly in winter, if the zoning for high or medium residential density surrounding the Park goes ahead without modification.

April 2023

The WCC formal engagement with the wider community about the former Workingmen's Bowling Club started this month. It included a workshop meeting at Newtown Hall on April 4th, where attendees were invited to put forward their ideas of how the space should be used.

At the April meeting a small group of members interested in Newtown history was formed to look into the idea of developing a Newtown History Walk. The group had had an enthusiastic meeting but further meetings were interrupted by illnesses and absences from Wellington, and then the development of history displays for the Association's 60th Anniversary in July took precedence. It might be timely, now spring is here, to revisit planning for a walk.

May 2023

On 11th May I attended a WCC workshop at Newtown Park Function Centre, which look at potential priorities for the next Long Term Plan.

On 12th May the Newtown Community Centre, now Te Whare Hapori o Ngā Puna Waiora, had its formal re-opening with a dawn blessing followed by speeches and kai. Regular daytime hours at the Colombo St site resumed on Monday 15th May.

15th May was also the date of our Association meeting. We had an initial introduction from WCC officers to the coming consultation on the Newtown Parking Plan and the transitional Newtown to Island Bay Cycleway, talked about the PDP Hearings process, and did some planning for our 60th Anniversary in July.

16th May brought the devastating news of the overnight fire at Loafers Lodge. We took a keen interest in the Community efforts to support those involved and supported and communicated where we could. Eryn Gribble at the Newtown Community Centre called a meeting on Monday 22nd of the 'Newtown Collective' of community groups and organisations, which I attended. We were reassured that the survivors of the fire were being well cared for, and there was little further that those of us not on the front line could do at that time. We recalled that after the Christchurch massacre in 2019 there were two 'Newtown Stands Together' community dinners at Newtown School, which were heartwarming community events. At that time there was agreement that we should continue to hold these, maybe once or twice a year - but then Covid intervened and nothing further happened. There was interest in revisiting this later in the year.

June 2023

On 15th June there was a Service of Remembrance for those affected by the Loafers Lodge Fire at St Paul's Cathedral in Hill St. This was a well attended and very moving occasion.

At our 19th June meeting there was a presentation from WCC and Wellington Water about wastewater network renewals in Newtown, likely to start in August. Newtown has been prioritised for this work in the expectation of considerable new development in the near future. The meeting also heard from Rowena Tun, Wellington Timebank Kaiwhakahaere, about the Timebank and her role.

The 4th PDP Hearing was on Centres, and our concern was a proposal that Newtown could be designated a Town Centre, instead of a Local Centre, and have the permitted height limits increased further. I spoke at a hearing about this on June 30th, and this time was supported by expert evidence from Tim Helm, an Economist.

That concludes the detailed report on the July 2022-June 2023 year.

The months from July to September have included

- Our Newtown Residents' Association 60th Anniversary on Saturday 29th July – the Association was incorporated on 29th July 1963. We celebrated with an open day in Newtown School Hall, with displays of Association history – including photos, posters and videos about Newtown Festival – and afternoon tea.
- The beginning of the WCC Consultation on the Newtown Parking Plan and Newtown to Berhampore bus and bike arrangements.
- Planning for a Meet the Candidates meetings for the Rongotai Electorate candidates on Monday 25th September at the Salvation Army Hall.

Other Activities during the 2022-2023 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 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 continued meeting via Zoom, on the last Monday of the month. 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 eight 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.

17th September 2023