

Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association

President's Report for the 2020/2021 Year.

Introduction

It has been a roller coaster year for the country as we struggled with the new norms of our response to the pandemic - border closure, lockdowns, lowering and raising of alert levels. As can be appreciated I write this in the hope that this year Covid 19 will not disrupt our AGM!

Fortunately, the Committee was already well versed in virtual meetings. Thanks to Stefan our email mailout system and website made it easy to keep you informed. We were thus well placed to retain our focus on the various work streams both new and old. Inevitably however, the disruption created by the pandemic on "business as usual" created more than usual delays in our dealings with Local and Central Government. This created some frustration as well as extra work and more committee meetings but it paid off in terms of getting and keeping the attention of other parties. Your Committee is optimistic it can work through those delays so long as Marlborough remains at Alert level one.

In short, certainly not an average year but as always a busy one for the Committee.

I stress what follows is very much a truncated summary of some of the matters the Committee has worked on over and above the likes of submissions on the Council Annual Plan, proposed changes to the Council's Freedom Camping bylaws, responding to the more egregious mussel farm applications, completing the revamp of the Te Mahia jetty car park area and so on. As appropriate I will invite other committee members to comment in the course of working through the various Agenda items.

Some Detail

Committee meetings: The Committee met **six** times by teleconference call and **once** via a face to face at Portage. We used our excellent email mailout system to implement our decision to use the Covid response legislation to hold an electronic AGM. We also kept members informed on this and our other work streams through the President Chatline (13 in total this year). Earlier in the year Stefan, Tom and Tania led a very successful refresh of the KCSRA website page and I hope you have enjoyed the new look.

Roading - Sounds Cyclic Road Crew: We are pleased at the increased level of activity in our area on essential regular road maintenance – cleaning culverts and water tables (drains).

However, Covid disrupted maintaining our oversight of the bedding in of the new Marlborough wide roading contract – a joint venture (JV) of Fulton Hogan and HEBs – and ensuring the Sounds Cyclic road crew initiative performed to expectation.

Despite the levels of improvement noted above both Alistair and Adrian (each experienced civil contractors) have expressed some concerns over capability and methodology deployed by the Cyclic crew and the JV generally - creating inefficiencies. An issue relevant to the Kenepuru is the very long travel times (dead time) for the road crews from Blenheim.

Completion of Kenepuru Road remedial work: We were very pleased to see the particularly poor section of Kenepuru road between Ohingaroa and Portage brought back to a reasonable state. This did take a fair bit of behind the scenes persistence (myself, Alistair and Adrian formally met with MR/MDC on roading matters three times). The on-going development of our working relationship with Councillor Maher also proved very useful.

We anticipate having a much-delayed meeting with the HEBS/FH JV, Marlborough Roads (MR) and MDC prior to the AGM. Hopefully will have more to report at the AGM. At the AGM under the agenda item of Roading I will also ask Alistair and Adrian to provide further comments.

Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP): The MEP as decided by the Hearing Panel early last year was the subject of numerous appeals, with the Aquaculture sector being very prominent and lodging over 25% of all appeals. As advised we joined in on several of the appeals as S 274 parties in order to maintain a watching brief over any behind the scenes deal making. On that note the Environment Court supervised mediations (Natural Character appeals) kicked off on 16 March and will finish on 1 April. An interesting process as I, Hanneke and Trevor are learning and, subject to the strictures of confidentiality, they may add a little more at the AGM.

Great to think we are on the penultimate lap of a process that KCSRA first engaged in back in 2014!

Variations to the MEP: As you will recall from our Chatlines a missing section of the MEP has been the Council's plan as to the treatment of Aquaculture in the Sounds both for existing activities and any future expansion. The formal notification by Council of two variations to the yet to be finalised MEP (!) took place just before Christmas. Variation 1 deals with Marine Farming and in particular shellfish (bivalve) farming. Variation 1A deals with the policy and rules around Finfish farming. Over February the Marine Sub-committee grappled with these proposals.

Where we landed in terms of our submissions on each Variation have been filed and as you will recall are available on the KCSRA website. We understand MDC has finalised the Hearing Panel. We await the details of the Hearing process and time line from Council. Many thanks to Trevor and Hanneke for their hard work on our submissions on Variation 1 and 1A respectively.

Sounds Advisory Group: Ross will present a short report on this Council convened group at the AGM. I take the opportunity to thank him for his willingness to travel to attend these meetings and get a feel for Council concerns and initiatives.

Marine Sub-Committee – Salmon Farming: In my last report the big news from NZKS was their vision of a massive 18,000,000 square metre farm producing up to 40,000 tonnes of salmon. It is proposed to be situated off Cape Lambert in close proximity to several important ecologically significant marine sites. On closer examination we thought the proposal under cooked and said so in our submission. To date, and not unexpectedly, matters have gone quiet as far as NZKS is concerned. No doubt King Salmon is busy digesting the submissions and reviewing their application.

Hanneke and I have continued to collaborate with a coalition of other local concerned organisations on NZKS initiatives. This has proved invaluable in managing workloads whilst ensuring an effective/efficient response.

Marine Sub-committee – Marlborough Scallops: A busy and successful year in terms of our involvement (via Tom and I) with the Ministerial convened Southern Scallop Working Group (SSWG). As you will recall In July of last year the SSWG released the **finalised** Southern Scallop Strategy for the Marlborough Sounds. This document was based on a round of consultation where the draft strategy was overwhelmingly endorsed by submitters (over 350). Again the KCSRA strategy of being persistent, working hard and forming long-term alliances with like-minded local organisations **proved a winner**.

Since then, as per the Strategy Document, the SSWG has been working to prepare an agreed Implementation Plan. As the KCSRA SSWG representative I agreed to be part of a smaller subgroup tasked with developing a draft for sign off by the full SSWG. Suffice to say my Zoom meeting skills have improved!

Hopefully, at the AGM I will be able to confirm that the Implementation Plan is now operative.

Plastics in the Marine Environment: As noted in recent Chatlines unauthorised discharges of plastic material from aquaculture activities is a matter that has concerned members off and on over the years. However, it was the recent work of a citizen science initiative (the Frayed Knot project) that caused us to take a closer look. This work took the initial steps to collate and systematically document the volume and source of this material being deposited at the head of Clova Bay (an area with a ecologically significant marine site).

One of the marine Sub-committee members - Adrian - has agreed to lead a higher-level review of what is happening and where the Council, as regulator, sits. Adrian may touch on progress at the AGM as time permits.

Community Infrastructure Projects: As you may recall we were unsuccessful in obtaining Council funding for an emergency evacuation site on Kenepuru Road. However after careful review and further meetings with Council staff a way ahead via MR seemed possible. Matters have not progressed as speedily as hoped but we are still intent on keeping this project alive. We may have more to report at the AGM.

The Log Site Barge project caused some concern when rumours circulated mid year that it had fallen into the Council too hard basket. However some spirited enquiries and discussion led by Adrian suggests the matter is not dead. Rather, Council is

pursuing some interesting technical solutions to the issue – providing a sea transport route for forest owners as opposed to taking their logs to market over the highly stressed and unsuitable Kenepuru road.

Conclusion

Over the course of the year Committee member Ron Rolston decided to resign in order to concentrate on some other projects. Ron was always an active and engaged committee member and I thank him for his contribution. I note former President Pat Williams has moved out of the area so wish to record his important contribution in taking the first steps to have KCSRA more directly engage with Central and Local Government on a long term basis. I also note his leadership over developing principled and evidence led opposition to unfortunate aquaculture development proposals.

An important part of being an effective organisation is being able to point to a wide and deep membership base when dealing with Local or Central Government. Accordingly, I was very pleased to see we finished the year with 330 paid up members (an increase of 60 over the previous year). At writing, I understand renewal subscriptions are coming in at a good rate.

The successes and good standing of the KCSRA reflect contributions from all committee members. I thank each one of them for their hard work and commitment.

As noted I, and the rest of the Committee, are willing to serve again, and if elected look forward to progressing the matters on hand.

Finally, thanks to the Portage Manager for kindly allowing us to use the conference room for committee and other meetings and, very importantly, the AGM.

Andrew Caddie, President
24 March 2021