



The President's Report to the 2017 Annual General Meeting

Our Association has had another very active year. This report covers some of the highlights for 2016-2017.

Newtown Festival and the Newtown Festival Trust

Once again we had an extremely successful Festival in March. Martin Hanley's Festival Director's report will give the details of this and also of the Newtown Festival Trust and its establishment. The Newtown Residents' Association has hosted the Festival since the first Street Fair in 1997. The 2014 AGM discussed the proposal of establishing a Trust to manage the Festival, and although progress towards this goal was slow at first it gained momentum this year. The Newtown Festival Trust came into existence on July 1st, and was accepted as having Charitable Status a few weeks later. This meeting will be voting on a motion to approve the transfer of the Festival assets from our Association to the Newtown Festival Trust. The Festival is now in its 21st year, and it seems appropriately symbolic that this is the year it gains independence and 'leaves home'.

The History of the Wellington South Licensing Trust

The Wellington South Licensing Trust was established in 1972, ceased to operate in 1998, and was wound up in 2001. One of its final acts was to give a grant to the Newtown Residents' Association to fund a history of the Trust. Time passed, people moved on, and early efforts to prepare a History were lost. In 2012 Steve Dunn, who was then the Association President, took on the task of making sure it was completed. He commissioned historian Peter Cooke to interview as many of the Trustees as possible, and subsequently asked Tony Pritchard to form the resulting information into a document for publication. This was posted on the Association website in August. Many thanks to Steve, Peter and Tony for keeping the project alive and bringing it to a conclusion, and also to the Trustees for the original grant and for their cooperation in recalling and recording the stories of the Trust.

The relationship with Wellington City Council

This time last year I reported that we had been consulted on the job description for the new WCC Newtown Community Liaison Officer, and that the job had been advertised. In November Ray Tuffin took up this role. He is a staunch advocate for Newtown and a very welcome addition to our community. His base Kia Ora Newtown, at 6 Constable St, is an accessible point of contact for locals and is also well used as a venue for community meetings. There are a number of community agencies and organisations active in Newtown, and Ray is very helpful in bringing us together to collaborate on local projects. Thank you to Ray for all the work on our behalf, and to Jenny Rains and the rest of the WCC Community Team for their support.

I also acknowledge the financial assistance from WCC. We are very grateful for the operating grant that underpins our activities and the other grants made from time to time for the community gardens and other projects.

Newtown Neighbours' Night

This event, on February 24th, was our contribution to Neighbours day and was supported by a grant from WCC as well as by a lot of practical help from Ray Tuffin, Vinnies Volunteers, the Police, the Fire Department, the Zoo, Timebank volunteers and a lot of our Association members. We invited all Newtown 'neighbours' to a BBQ and evening of activities at Newtown Park and it was a great success. We will be hoping to repeat it next year, and it might well become a regular event. Particular thanks to the event organising committee members Daphne Pilaar, Martin Powell and Meta Byers, greatly assisted by Ray Tuffin from WCC.

Submissions

We have made submissions on the **Wellington City Council Annual Plan**, the **WCC Playspaces Policy**, the **Wellington Region Waste Management and Minimisation Plan** and the **Wellington Water application to WCC for Town Belt Easement** for the construction and operation of the Prince of Wales/Omāroro Reservoir. One of the main issues addressed in both the Annual Plan submission and the Playspaces Policy was the as-yet-unmet need for improved facilities in Carrara Park, especially the provision of public toilets for Park users. We approved of the Waste Minimisation Plan, and gave cautious approval to the Reservoir plans, with the proviso of the need for peer review of some aspects of the design and for mitigating the effect of construction on residents.

We also made a submission to the **Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment**, who were consulting on an "**Urban Development Authorities Discussion Document**". We oppose the proposed sweeping powers for Urban Development Authorities to bypass the usual planning and consenting procedures.

Our Town Newtown Project

At the last AGM we agreed that our Association would join the steering group for community involvement in how to use WCC funding set aside for the development of community facilities in Newtown. \$48,000 was allocated for the consultation phase of the project and paid into the Association bank account. Our Treasurer Jane Patterson, has been managing this money in accordance with a budget agreed by the steering group, which also includes members from the Newtown Community and Cultural Centre and WCC. The project has engaged a Project Designer and Facilitator, Cally O'Neill, who has used a questionnaire to gather as much information as possible from people who live, work or play in Newtown. There have also been public events and for several weeks a public presence in the 'pop-up shop' at 199 Riddiford St. Cally is now analyzing all the data that has been gathered, and in the near future there will be another series of public meetings to report on the results and to decide on the next steps in the process.

Keep Newtown Clean

I have continued to co-ordinate the quarterly clean-up mornings. We have a good routine going and I am pleased for our Association to have a presence on the streets in a 'hands on' fashion. Dave and Liz of SB Maintenance, graffiti removal contractors to WCC, are a constant presence. I would like to thank them, the WCC personnel who support them, all the volunteers who come along on the day, and Newtown New World who support the BBQ which is an important part of the proceedings.

Community Gardens

The Newtown Community Garden Group, established in 2013 under the 'umbrella' of our Association to grow edible plants in Carrara Park, fell off in membership with key people moving away and this year almost came to a halt. It has now been revived with the help of Lachlan Marshall from the Salvation Army and his team, who have taken on the task of park maintenance and have made a start on building raised garden beds for a fresh start with veggie growing. There are also plans for raised beds on the old Caltex site in Riddiford St and a new gardening opportunity outside the newly established Menzshed at 2 Coromandel St. Thanks are due to Lachie and his crew, to Christian Williams, for supporting the garden from the start, to Linnea Lindstrom who has resumed active involvement after a break, to Martin Hanley and to Ray Tuffin for supporting the project.

Meet the Candidates Meeting

We had an extremely well-attended meeting at St Anne's Hall on September 5th. Thank you to all the candidates who participated, to Patrick Morgan for chairing it so well, to Melelisa Togatama for timekeeping and to all who helped with supper and with setting up and clearing up.

The re-purposing of the old Caltex site

Congratulations to Martin Hanley for a successful outcome from his many hours of work negotiating between the new owners of the site and Wellington City Council and the community groups Mechanical Tempest and ReBicycle. These organisations now have a home there for at least a few years, where they will be helping people maintain their bikes and assisting people with acquiring bikes and learning to ride. The site will also be home to the Dance-o-mat coin operated dance floor that anyone can use. A coin-operated ex-laundromat washing machine powers four speakers that surround a custom-made dance floor. This is a design that has been operated by Gap Filler in Christchurch for several years, and Gap filler have licensed Newtown Festival to re-create it here. This is possible because of a local sponsor, who doesn't want to be named. We are very grateful to this anonymous benefactor.

Conclusion

I have now been President for two years, and am continuing to find it a very interesting and satisfying activity. I am very grateful to everyone who has assisted the Association, by helping with events, responding to emails, contributing to submissions, attending meetings, and in many other ways. My particular thanks to Jane Patterson, our Treasurer, to Steve Cosgrove for taking notes at our meetings, and to Kevin Lethbridge for keeping the membership records. Martin Hanley is a regular source of advice and assistance with all sorts of projects, thank you Martin.

This is a landmark year, as we see the establishment of the Newtown Festival Trust and its separation from the Association. I am sure we all wish the Trust and the Trustees every success in continuing the Festival and look forward to working together for the benefit of Newtown and the surrounding suburbs in the future.

Rhona Carson
President.

17th September 2017.