



The President's Report to the 2018 Annual General Meeting, 15th October 2018

This report briefly outlines the main Association activities for 2017-2018.

Establishing the Newtown Festival Trust

The AGM last year approved transferring the Newtown Festival and its assets from our Association to the Newtown Festival Trust. This process was completed in December 2017, when all six Festival Trustees had been appointed. The Festival in March was again very successful, and we look forward to its continuing for many years to come. We still have a close relationship because key Festival personnel are also involved with the Association, including me as Festival Administrator and Martin Hanley as Festival Director, but at an organisational level they are now completely independent. Because of this we are proposing that this AGM approves changes to the Association Rules, which remove the current references to the Newtown Festival.

Meet the Candidates Meeting

In November we had a second Meet the Candidates Meeting at St Anne's Hall. The first, in September, had been for the Parliamentary Election, at which Paul Eagle was elected as MP for Rongotai – congratulations Paul! This second one was for the subsequent By-Election for the Wellington City Council Southern Ward seat that Paul had held. Thank you to all the candidates who participated, to Patrick Morgan for chairing it so well, and to all the members who helped in various ways to make this a successful event. The Candidate who was successful in the Election was Fleur Fitzsimons, and we have welcomed Fleur as one of our two local ward Councilors.

Protest at the closure of Newtown Kiwibank and Post Office

Also in November we were shocked to hear that NZ Post and Kiwibank were going to close the Newtown Post Shop. Kiwibank was to close completely, in favour of a stand-alone branch in Kilbirnie, and the Post Office was to be replaced by a postal agency. A number of local residents mounted a spirited protest and organised a petition to the Minister of State Enterprises, the Hon Winston Peters. This wasn't in itself an Association initiative, but we were pleased to provide support, write letters and present the Petition on behalf of the community. We were also supported by MP Paul Eagle and by the Mayor, Justin Lester. Thanks and congratulations are owed to the energy and commitment of the hard working group who organised it all. Sadly, ultimately the protest and petition were ineffective and the Post Shop duly closed in June.

Newtown Neighbours' Night

This event, on March 16th 2018, was our contribution to Neighbours Day and followed the pattern established in 2017 of inviting all Newtown 'neighbours' to an early evening BBQ and a range of activities at Newtown Park. We were officially the hosts but we owe a great deal to Ray Tuffin (then WCC Community Liaison Officer for Newtown), who helped greatly with the organising. I also want to thank our Association members and the many other helpers from the Salvation Army, St Tom's, the City Mission, Bikes in Schools, Accessible Golf, the Fire Service and elsewhere. They prepared and cooked

food, did face painting for children, and organised activities. Thanks also to the Rock Academy, Sendam Rawkestra and the Mighty Ukes for the musical entertainment.

Submissions

We have made submissions on the **Wellington City Council 10 Year Plan**, and also **Traffic Resolutions – Bus Stop Changes at Wellington Hospital, Traffic Resolutions – Residential electric vehicle (EV) charging stations**, and the **Alcohol Control By-Law**.

We also made submissions to the **District Licensing Committee** about the proposed hours for a license renewal at the Zoo Bar (outcome -the hours were restricted) and against the granting of an off-license at premises in Riddiford St (outcome – the application was withdrawn).

Our Town Newtown Project – Community Facilities Upgrade

Jane Patterson (Association Treasurer) and I have continued to represent the Residents' Association on the steering group for this project, along with the Newtown Community and Cultural Centre Trust and the Wellington City Council. The initial stage drew to a close in March 2018, with the publishing of a report on the results of the community engagement. There was then a process to engage architects who would continue to work with the community on designs for upgrading the Newtown Community and Cultural Centre, Network Newtown and the Newtown Hall in Daniell St. WSP Opus were chosen, and have produced draft designs which are available for comment before proceeding to the final design stage. Construction is expected to begin in July 2019. We continue to hold funds (from a grant from WCC) in our Association's 'Project' bank account, which are gradually being spent on costs for public workshops.

Bloom Collective

One of the needs expressed consistently through the Our Town Newtown community engagement was for spaces for artistic and musical activities. Ray Tuffin put a lot of effort into trying to identify places where this could happen. This came to pass when the developers who bought the former Salvation Army properties allowed the premises at 20 Rintoul St, which had been the Family Store, to be used by a number of artists and musicians who came together under the banner of the Bloom Collective. This is only a temporary solution however as the premises will be demolished for development in a matter of months, so any ideas about another future home are welcome. Our Association has provided an 'umbrella' for the Collective in applying for a grant from WCC for set up costs and supplies, which was successful. We are holding this in our 02 account, and disbursing as required.

Kia Ora Newtown

The Wellington City Council base Kia Ora Newtown, at 6 Constable St, continues to be an accessible point of contact between locals and the Council. Ray Tuffin, the first WCC Community Liaison Officer for Newtown, did an excellent job of gathering data about Newtown's needs, which was then used to inform the provision of services. We are very pleased that a contractor has been employed specifically to keep Newtown's streets and environs clean and tidy; this is much appreciated. Ray was also instrumental in establishing connections between the different community support agencies in Newtown. Ray has moved on from Kia Ora, but he hasn't moved far as he is now the Rongotai Electorate Community Engagement Officer, working with MP Paul Eagle. His place in the WCC Community Team has been taken by Jared Corston, who is continuing the good work. We are grateful to WCC CEO Kevin Lavery for establishing this position, and to Jenny Rains, Sophie Parsons, and the rest of the WCC Community Team for their continuing support.

Monthly Meetings

As well as the specific activities above we have continued with regular monthly meetings on the third Monday of every month from February to November, which have covered a lot of subjects.

Wellington City Council Support

We are very grateful for the Residents' Association operating grant that underpins our activities. Less money has been available for the operating grant this year, but applications for other grants for the community gardens and other projects have been successful.

Conclusion

I have now been President for three years, and have continued 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, thank you Martin.

Rhona Carson

President.

14th October 2018