



**Minutes of the Newtown Residents Association meeting
16 February 2026 at 7.30pm, St Thomas' Church Community Lounge, 200 Riddiford Street.**

Present: Merio Marsters (Chair), Rhona Carson (Secretary), Steve Cosgrove (Minutes), Sam Somers (Treasurer), Malcolm Menzies, Carol Comber, Ellen Blake, Andrew Wilson, Steve Dunn, Hilary Watson, Kassie McLuskie, Ann Devoy, David Jenkins, Wendy Blue, Melissa Reid, Sam Chandler, Cr Laurie Foon,

Apologies: Joel Berryman (WCC Safety Team - City Council officers were on-call due to weather emergency today), Warwick Taylor, Léonie Walker, Laura Zhong,

Minutes from the previous meeting

These were taken as read.

- 1st - Rhona
- 2nd - Merio

Financial

- The NRA got a small GST refund
- \$1150 (inc gst) from the Council for our annual grant [At the meeting this was mistakenly reported as \$1500 - \$1150 is the correct figure].
- NRA account balance is just over \$3000 and \$13,000 in our term deposit
Actual balances: Association - \$3,244.76 and Term Deposit - \$13,664.13

Correspondence

Our new constitution has been lodged successfully. Noted that all committee members' names, addresses were needed to be attached to the constitution document. Our next task is to look into being a registered charitable

Next task to complete is:

Bank account signatories will be sorted out after the Newtown Festival and to Martin Hanley's availability.

Poneke Public Housing Futures

Ellen Blake addressed the meeting to introduce this new group. It is part of a national structure set up by ActionStation with the objective of keeping public housing we have and building more. She introduced a petition: <https://our.actionstation.org.nz/petitions/save-state-housing-in-poneke-wellington>

Ellen and Carol Comber described the situation in more detail.

It was noted:

- For government to retain social housing and increase supply
- Pressure the government, reasons why state housing is important for our community, affordability and sustainability

Support by signing a paper petition, scan QR code.

285 Mansfield St matters

An update on this issue which has been discussed at previous meetings.

A person was arrested being seen and located inside this house, which is supposed to be emptied and not safe to access.

A serious assault took place nearby and could be related to this house. Police have been actively involved and charges are still pending. No CCTV down this end of Newtown.

WCC has declared this property as 'unsanitary' and notice has been served for the owner.

Support from the community is awareness of issues around this property, anyone who wants to support those affected, make contact through the association.

Other social issues

The selling of drugs on our streets and operating from residential properties, is proving very difficult to follow up. It was agreed that each time a place selling drugs is shut down, Newtown seems to be a better place but an increase of burglaries and vehicle break-ins. The Association will follow up too, by communicating with council, landlords and NZ Police.

There was a recent relevant article on RNZ: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/585861/people-we-ve-never-seen-before-homelessness-in-wellington-not-letting-up-agencies-say>

Our streets are looking dirty where people are gathering, beggars by ATM machines and New World, litter of rubbish, and bus stops.

Salvation Army, Captain Andrew Wilson

Owen St Development of 25 new dwellings, 1-3 bedroom accessible units and a community facility included in the planning for this development, probably by the start of 2028. Site around 185 Owen Street (Access behind their current community housing), not the mound at 194.

State of the Nation report Various issues from this report were shared with the meeting <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sppu/state-nation-2026/>

Emergency Services (part of WREMO)

Noted that none of the cities in Te Upoko o te Ika had to declare a state of emergency, however as a region, impacted by fallen trees and some power outages. There is a lot of flooding in Hutt City. We are past the worst of this storm, but there are storm systems more off the coast, so we should all be prepared. A meeting for community preparedness is at the Newtown Community Centre Hall on Saturday 21 March from 1pm till 3pm.

Newtown Festival

Sunday 8th March official opening taking place at Tangata Whenua stage. There will be a parade to mark International Women's Day leading from the stage to the Newtown Community Centre. Morning tea will be hosted by the Newtown Resident Association executive team, organised by Marion Leighton. There will be a lot more activities for families, a lot of effort to increase activities down by Gordon Street/Gordon Place area this year. Stallholder packs are going out next week. Julie Anne Genter will open the festival.

Council Things

Laurie provided us with an overview of life within the new Council.

There was not a lot happening until the sewage plant failed and then, we had a climate environment event. Dealing with weather emergencies. Decisions made by the central government that the City to Sea bridge is to stay. Golden Mile on hold to be reviewed. Council working on a triennium plan, on projects' that could be investigated and a direction on what could be committed.

Patrick O'Rourke died recently

Warrick Taylor emailed asking that we note that Patrick has passed away. He had a long history with the Association, from the 60s through till the early 2000s.

Fireworks Ban

Kassie updated the meeting with progress approaching Predator Free Wellington, the Zoo, and SPCA for support for this. To reach out to other organisations in support.

28 February is Parking Day

Ellen has a stall at the Southern end of Cuba Street.

Protest - 1970's protest photos and art, 6 March to 3 April

Hilary Watson shared an exhibition at 24.7 Gallery, Riddiford Street, with further promotion at Sub-Culture. Everyone is welcome. Also open on the day of Newtown Festival.

Meeting ended at 8:55pm

Next meeting: Monday 16th March at 7.30pm