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NEWTOWN RESIDENTS' ASSN.

**Newtown Residents Association Minutes of Meeting**

Newtown Salvation Army Worship & Community Centre at 4 Normanby Street,
Monday 19th October 2026, 7.30pm - 9pm

**Present:** Merio Marsters (Chair), Rhona Carson (Secretary), Steve Cosgrove (Minutes), Malcolm Menzies, Bryony Hales, Don McDonald, Wendy Blue, Tommy Berridge, Vania Szymkowiak (WREMO), Andrew Wilson, Nicholas Pointon, Helen Blenkin, Lainey Cowan, Michelle Wolland, Lēonie Walker, Mike Scott, Cr Laurie Foon

**Apologies:** Carol Comber, MP Julie Anne Genter, Hilary Watson
Approval of Association **previous meeting minutes for September and Annual General meeting minutes** included:
1st - Malcolm Menzies
2nd - Nicholas Pointon
**Carried**

**There was no financial report available**

**Guest speakers:**
**DCM (Downtown Community Ministry)** - Natalia Cleland CEO; https://www.dcm.org.nz/
Appreciate the invite to share about DCM. Based in Lukes Lane in the city. Cover WCC areas, street outreach service funded by WCC for Social Workers and Outreach workers. Proactive outreach to locations for individuals sleeping rough, living in the cars around the bays,
They are in Newtown about three times a week, working with our community support agencies in the suburb.
At Lukes Lane, there is a dental service, health services, drop in centre, foodbanks and money management and a range of services, including mental health nurse and addiction counsellors, lived experiences. Engagement with individuals is by their consent being involved, connecting with the right person/kaimahi. DCM is not a housing provider but works closely with social housing services and supports individuals when they are housed. During the July - September quarter DCM outreach team have engaged with 160 people rough sleeping.
CBD is the highest area of notifications, Newtown is the second largest source of notifications. Kaimahi is not identified within our community, not wearing uniform or hi-vest, and the work is high-risk. Concerns are always about staff safety working in pairs.
There were a wide range of questions from the meeting. Types of people and location of people living in cars in vacant carpark areas on Adelaide Road. Problems for individuals without ID is an issue. DCM has purchased individual forms of ID, eg: birth certificates, 18+ ID cards, etc, have purchased equipment to get photos printed.
Drugs in Newtown & CBD are still a very big issue and openly used in public view. Police have had some success, but the problem remains. There is concern about the range of drugs being passed off with no controls.
These people are likely to be more vulnerable if forced to 'move on' from high-visibility areas. The new Move on act comes into force on 25 October 2026. Police are still working on operational procedures for this act.
Changes to the FIXIT app (an update will be provided).
The meeting recorded their appreciation fSyzmkoor the work of DCM and Natalia present tonight.

***Any concerns about the welfare of people on the street can be reported to the Council by phoning +64-4-4994444, or direct contact to DCM if you are concerned about people in the suburb.***

**WREMO (Wellington Regional Emergency Management Organisation)** - Vania Szymkowiak; Vania circulated notes outlining current positive resilience mahi progressing across Newtown.

- The Newtown Community Response Plan is being refreshed. People are encouraged to volunteer their time to support this.
- A range of awareness and connection building activities have been successful. Some of these are being taken up by the rest of the region.
- They have worked with Dwell Housing to create a resilience action 'Preparedness Passport' that is being circulated among community housing tenants. This too is being widely adapted by other regions.
- There is ongoing work supporting and reflecting on the experience of flooding in April. Part of this is building a map of resources and risks etc. There is also a move to record more events to improve community knowledge.
- The nationwide 'Shake Out' event happened on Wednesday 21 October.

**Update from Councilor Foon**

- Council is consulting on the City Safety and Wellbeing Plan. Our Councillors are pushing for the plan to be extended to Newtown on 5th November.
- A large proportion of calls are on weekends from 10pm to 4am. Most others relate to the chronic homelessness community. They are working with DCM on this.
- This Thursday Council is considering how finances can be cut to fit within a 4% rate rise. These cuts come from all areas of the community.
- There are three consultations coming:
  - October 22 (this Thursday) how Council engages and connects
  - Arts Policy
  - Rating Policy review. This is about how the total rates bill is collected. Some things being considered are: Reducing the business differential; Land Value Rates; Increasing the area where action can be taken on derelict buildings. This currently only goes as far as Adelaide Road to the Basin and the hospital, but we could ask for it to be extended to Newtown. Part of the LTP and a long process especially for derelict buildings. Consultation closes Sunday 15th November.

**Newtown Stakeholders Group**

This cross-sector group has met about three times.

- NGOs (DCM, Salvation Army, Residents' Association and others)
- Māori Wardens
- Council
- Business
- Politicians
- Police

There are three large pieces of work:

- Newtown Heart working on revitalization of the shopping centre
- Public education and improving perception around what to do if there are concerns about people in the street community.
- Where is the space between what Police are mandated to do and members of the public feel comfortable to do (there is a big gap). What does this gap look like?

**Salvation Army update**

- There will be an Advanced Voting site at the Newtown site
- Two new programmes are starting targeting specific vulnerable groups. One will be a two year pilot programme looking at how they can best be supported. (Funded by the Social Investment Agency.)

Concern was expressed about a person sitting near a money machine demanding money. This person can be found to be very intimidating. It was pointed out that this has a negative impact on the whole community.

In response to a question, several people said there is very little gang activity on our streets, but there is some, which is being monitored.

**Wellington Community Network Group** - This is a meeting of Newtown and Island Bay community centres, and some other community groups.

**Wellington Heritage Festival** - We are hosting a photo exhibition at Artists 24.7 – at 247 Riddiford St.

**Meeting ended:** 9:06pm
**Next meeting:** Monday 16th November 2026