

Minutes of a meeting of the Mataura Community Board, held in the Elderly Citizens Centre, McQueen Avenue, Mataura, on Tuesday 25 January 2022, at 5.30pm.

Present Alan Taylor (Chairman), Cr Neville Phillips, Linda Sinclair, Sue Taylor and Steve Dixon.

In attendance The HR/Administration Manager (Susan Jones), Roading Asset Manager (Mr Peter Standring), Pauline Tinker, SNAPS Manager, Kathy Nicoll, SNAPS trustee, Loana Mesman (Furever Homes) and Gail Poole, Community Development Coordinator.

Apology Greg Chaffey apologised for absence.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Steve Dixon, seconded by Linda Sinclair, **THAT** the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 29 November 2021, as circulated, be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true and complete record.

2. CLIMATE RESILIENCE PROJECTS - PRESENTATION FROM ENVIRONMENT SOUTHLAND (SC3088/SC0463)

Mr Ramon Strong, Catchment Manager for Environment Southland was in attendance and provided an update on the climate resilience projects relating to the Mataura flood protection upgrade work. He provided a handout of his presentation to those in attendance. As a result of the Government invitation to submit “shovel ready” funding applications during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown, Environment Southland had been successful in securing funding for flood protection works in Southland. The Mataura project budget approved was \$6 million. The total Government contribution to the whole scheme was 75% of the cost.

S Dixon asked whether the project included removing the gravel island below the bridge. Mr Strong confirmed it was not part of the project.

The Chairman referred to the amount of water that could be held back as result of the flood bank improvements and if it was done in an area away from the township it may help. Mr Strong said there would be little benefit doing that as the water would still need to be released.

In response to Cr Phillips, Mr Strong said the focus of the project in the short term was to improve the resilience and structure of the flood banks. There were challenges in Gore and the project was aimed at making the stopbanks stronger. Stantec was undertaking a lot of hydraulic modelling for the Gore stopbanks. Mr Strong said there was political interest in perhaps doing a desktop study about the options for holding water back in the Gore catchment.

The Chairman referred to the gravel island below the bridge and said it would allow more freeboard if the island was removed. It now seemed there was an impasse about the island. He said the Board would like to see the issue resolved. Flooding in Mataura was very real. Mr Strong said in terms of the build up of gravel he could not comment on whether there was a link and effect to further upstream. With erosion of the flood bank, the 2020 flood was the largest on record. Environment Southland had spent over \$1 million since the February 2020 floods and a big flood event would impact on the river system. He believed the base of the bank was fairly stable. In terms of the gravel build up a consent had been granted to allow gravel extraction and some had been removed by a contractor. However, it had been deemed to be unsuitable for aggregate. As he understood it, the contractor had said it was not worth taking more gravel out. Environment Southland staff had been working on other options to remove the gravel.

S Dixon asked if anyone else took the gravel from the river, would they have to pay royalties to the Rununga. Mr Strong was unsure but it would be a direct arrangement with the Rununga. He said LandPro would be flying the entire Mataura River to undertake a detailed survey and model of the Mataura River corridor. It would be a very useful tool for Environment Southland to determine future gravel extraction and river management amongst other things. The data was expected by May. S Dixon advised the contractor had been told they would have to pay an exorbitant royalty to remove the gravel. Mr Strong advised he had heard the same earlier in the day and would be following it up.

Mr Strong said a major flood event as had happened in February 2020 resulted in significant reverberations across the whole river and there was a lot of additional work required.

Cr Phillips referred to River Street where the old town hall was located. The issue had been going on for a long time and nothing seemed to have been done. The flow of the river had been compromised by the amount of gravel. Mr Strong said the key issue was they were natural processes and could not necessarily be controlled by Environment Southland. The issues were not unique to Southland. The data currently held by Environment Southland dated back to 2008 and the pending survey would provide valuable information for river management purposes.

Cr Phillips asked whose responsibility it was to erect a fence along River Street to protect the public. Was it the Council or the Community Board? Mr Strong understood the fence had been erected by Council parks staff soon after the 2020 flood.

The Chairman acknowledged the funding from central Government and the project work being undertaken by Environment Southland.

S Dixon said the River Street issue needed to be referred to the Council for action on the fence.

The Chairman extended thanks to Mr Strong for attending the meeting and for his presentation.

Mr Strong departed the meeting at 6.22pm

3. CONTROL OF CATS IN MATAURA (SC2696)

Mrs Pauline Tinker addressed the meeting about the work she undertook and neutering cats and dogs to reduce the number of animals. It was a people problem. She had started the op shop to fund the project. Over 400 cats and kittens and nearly 200 dogs had been neutered over the past 18 months.

Loana Mesman from Furever Homes said the organisation was publicly funded and supported Pauline's work. Since 1 January 2022 just over 400 cats and kittens had been bought into their care. Many animals were dumped by people. There were a lot of animals in care across Southland. With the Gore SPCA closing, there was no-one able to help. She agreed it was a people problem and people did not de-sex their animals which had a domino effect on the number of strays in the community. She had been to Parliament about the issue. She contracted to the Southland District Council about wild and feral animals. She said it was a national problem and the diseases carried by cats and the damage caused by the wild cat population was huge. Under the Pest Control Act, a wild cat was deemed a pest and Councils could act.

The Chairman asked what was considered to be the remedy to the problem. Ms Mesman said it was education and funding.

S Dixon said it might be time for cats to be registered like dogs were. Ms Mesman said legally anything rehomed had to be microchipped. The organisation was required to advertise and hold a cat for seven days. A vet could only euthanise a cat if it was seriously injured otherwise due process had to be followed.

The Chairman said the discussion had been very beneficial. He appreciated the work being undertaken by Furever Homes and thanked those in attendance for their time. Ms Mesman said Furever Homes greatly appreciated the work being done by Pauline and it had taken a lot of demand off the organisation.

4. MEETING DATES (SC2617)

A memo had been received from the Administration Manager with a proposed meeting schedule for 2022, as follows:

- Monday 7 March
- Monday 2 May
- Monday 20 June
- Monday 1 August
- Monday 12 September
- Monday 7 November (statutory meeting)
- Monday 28 November

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Linda Sinclair, seconded by Sue Taylor, THAT the meeting schedule for 2022 be adopted.

5. RECYCLING BIN FOR ALUMINIUM CANS (SC0689)

A memo had been received from the Roading Asset Manager advising there was presently a facility collect both aluminium and cardboard in Mataura. Just prior to Christmas, there had been some reluctance with the collection due to the amount of contamination in the bin. The bin had since been returned with a new sign and it was hoped that the public would adhere to disposing of cans and cardboard only.

Council staff were presently working with a consultant around the District's response to waste. As a result, there may be some suggestions about specifically implementing recycling facilities within schools and pre-schools.

In response to S Dixon, the Manager said the Government was collecting a lot of revenue and the Council may be able to apply for funding but it needed to show the level of work it had undertaken.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Steve Dixon, seconded by Linda Taylor, THAT the information be received.

6. CHILDREN JUMPING OFF THE MATAURA BRIDGE (SC2696)

The Chairman said there had been concerns in the community about children diving off the bridge and having difficulty getting out of the river. Gail Poole said there had been discussions about what young people wanted to do in the town and there was interest in swimming and feedback suggested that there needed to be a safe way of getting out of the river. There was an iron bar but unless children were tall enough to reach the bar, they were stuck and often needed rescuing. It was acknowledged that children could not be stopped from jumping off the bridge but they needed a safe way of getting out. The Chairman noted the drowning statistics to date this year mostly related to rivers. There had been mention of the swimming pool but jumping off the bridge occurred even when the Mataura pool was open. He said it came back to education and perhaps signage to discourage people jumping off the bridge. Ms Poole said some young people had been taught water safety skills at Camp Columba.

S Dixon said it was an NZTA problem because the bridge was on state highway. No-one was interested in the signage and there needed to be deterrents.

Cr Phillips said the danger was about getting out of the water and the rock ledges that had become undermined under the bridge in certain river conditions could trap people and they could not get out. He suggested young people needed to be taken to the area and have the danger emphasised to them. The Chairman added the river could change quickly and young people could not determine water levels. The Waimumu stream was a better option for swimming.

The Chairman said the Board would like to meet with the Council and he suggested including the issue for discussion. The Board concurred.

Cr Phillips asked what should be done in the meantime. Was it a matter of erecting signage?

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Phillips, seconded by Linda Sinclair, THAT the Council be requested to approach NZTA to erect appropriate signage at the Mataura bridge to discourage young people jumping and diving off the bridge.

The Roothing Asset Manager said NZTA should be approached given the road was under its authority. He expected there would be a regime for bridges in other parts of the country.

7. UPDATE ON INTERSECTION OF SH1 AND BRIDGE STREET (SC2783)

A memo had been received from the Roothing Asset Manager advising the last discussion he had about the intersection had been in late November with the newly appointed Waka Kotahi Journey Manager, Nicole Felts. The Manager had highlighted to her the real safety issues at the intersection that had been well recognised for over 10 years and which still existed with no real commitment from the agency to resolve.

Ms Felts had advised that NZTA had applied for design funding for the intersection improvement and would hear back in a few weeks as to whether it had been approved. She understood that it had been a frustrating situation and added that NZTA was looking at options to reassess the intersection under different criteria to get a better result with its priority for funding. It was endeavouring to find a resolution.

The Chairman felt the decision of NZTA delaying the funding was entirely unsatisfactory for the community. Previous discussions with NZTA had always centred on the upgrade being based on safety and not financial reasons. He would like to see a more positive response from NZTA. He appreciated the work put in by the Manager. The Manager said he had pushed a lot of buttons. NZTA was very tight with its funding allocation. Having a design completed and ready for funding would be the best outcome for the Board along with a hope that it could be picked up as a result of other projects not proceeding.

Cr Phillips asked what the design was. The Manager advised it was traffic lights on both sides of the intersection. The project would be coordinated by NZTA in conjunction with KiwiRail. The design was expected to be completed by July.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Alan Taylor, seconded by Steve Dixon, THAT the information be received.

8. GENERAL

- Gail Poole advised a holiday programme had been run at the Bunker for the past three weeks. A number of bikes had been made available for children to use at the bike park. Basketball was very popular and more hoops were needed in the town. An evaluation meeting was likely to be held in February with the hope of being able to continue with the holiday programme.
- Her role as a Community Connector had been sidelined into a Covid response and she would be assisting people who were isolating at home. The work she had been doing would continue but as part of the Covid response, she would be concentrating on those isolating and essential needs for those people. There was a focus on domestic violence and mental health. As a result, she may not be as readily available for community projects as she had been. Hokonui Rununga was involved with the network and the workload would be shared with it.

The meeting concluded at 7.19pm