

**Kuaotunu Residents and Ratepayers Association**  
Notes from Public Meeting  
held at Kuaotunu Hall  
27/10/2019

*Committee members Brent Page, Chair; Kathy Speirs, Treasurer; Kate Nielsen, Secretary; Luke Reilly, Craig Lidgard, Carrie Parker, Carolyn Gibbs, Alastair Brickell, Bruce Pilkington*

**Meeting opened:** just past 3 pm

**Committee Present:** Brent, Kathy, Kate, Bruce, Alastair

**Public:** approx 30 members of the public

### **Half-pipe update**

The project to establish a skateboard half-pipe in Kuaotunu has been ongoing for over two years. The KRRRA holds in escrow approx \$6,500 in fundraised monies for the project. The main stumbling block to progress has been getting site approval for the Domain from all parties.

#### Two developments:

1. The Whitianga skate park currently has a full-size half-pipe which will become available once the planned upgrades there have been completed. TCDC have given Kuaotunu first refusal on the ramp if & when - which may be as much as two years. In the meantime...
2. Te Rerenga school has a small moveable half-pipe for sale for \$3,000. The KRRRA could use some of the half-pipe funds to purchase it, and position it on half of the tennis court. This is an immediate solution, it benefits our local primary school, and it requires no site consent from DoC or Iwi (the "tennis court" is officially a non-specific recreation area).

Resolution: that the funds held in escrow by the KRRRA be used to purchase Te Rerenga School's small half-pipe for \$3000.00
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**Carried unanimously**

Re-location of the half-pipe: a post will be made on KT Katch-up calling for "dads" (and mums, and any other humans willing & able to help!) to dis-assemble the ramp; Dave Bryant will be asked for use of his truck to transport it; and the mums & dads etc will re-assemble it at the tennis court.

Important general safety note: the existing v small wooden ramp at the tennis court was damaged recently when the new - powerful - Westpac Rescue Helicopter landed; Recreation Reserve users are reminded to be careful when the helicopter is landing or taking off. The Te Rerenga ramp is big & heavy and will not blow over.

### **Community Plan**

The latest draft has been distributed among members and the KRRRA is seeking feedback.

- We need clarification of purpose: it should be clear in the CP intro that it is the *community's* plan not the KRRRA's plan; the KRRRA's function is to represent the community's wishes to other authorities and the CP serves as a blueprint; the KRRRA does not intend itself to be first port-of-call for, for example, developers wishing to enter

the community; rather we hope that the Council, when thus applied to, will refer to our CP and consult with us. Although many of the points in our Plan are aspirational and we have no legal mandate or method of enforcement, nevertheless our collective voice, in the CP and championed by the KRRRA, needs to be so strong we have a better chance of being heard.

- the TCDC has looked at our draft and is in the main positive. Brent & Kathy are meeting with Allan Tiplady this Thursday to discuss it.
- some of the wording in the refreshed plan needs to be as specific as it was in the 2009 plan, eg not allowing jet-skis, or mining of any kind.
  - the current re-fresh of the plan builds on the 2009 plan; it does not replace it. The 2019 plan has eliminated repetition, updated items that have been achieved or are no longer current, and distilled the essence of main points. Both the 2009 and the 2019 plans are freely available on the website for reference.
- highlighting the rich artistic nature of the community - does our plan do that adequately? The meeting says Yes.
- Medical facilities: the 2019 refresh draft states that Whitianga should remain the commercial hub, including medical facilities; however there are many outreach services that come to Kuaotunu; and in the next couple of weeks there will be a couple of trial doctors' clinics here. Perhaps the phrase *medical facilities* should be struck.
  - related point: The Happy Local Hub is about to be up and running, providing a co-working space, and a clinic space medical services. The meeting is in favour of the KRRRA writing a letter in support of this initiative.

### **Spat farm**

Following discussion at the Public Meeting in February, the KRRRA made a submission on behalf of the community in opposition to the proposed mussel spat farm in Mercury Bay. The KRRRA now seeks affirmation that this was indeed what the community wished (it was rushed as there was a deadline to meet), and guidance on whether we should continue to pursue it. 5th November is the deadline for requesting to speak at the hearing on 9th December.

The meeting is in favour of continuing to oppose the spat farm.

- Although the Whauwhau is outside the KRRRA's geographical area, the spat farm will cause visual pollution from Waitaia, which is linked strongly to KT; traffic from potential land-based infrastructure will impact heavily on KT village; one aquaculture venture on the east coast of the Coromandel is seen as the thin end of the wedge, setting a precedent for other development which could more closely impact the KT coast.
- Save Mercury Bay Trust has been set up to co-ordinate opposition. A lead lawyer will take point but requires other submissions in support. There have been over 100 submissions against, from individuals and groups. About twenty group submissions have been identified as strong enough to stand in support, of which the KRRRA's is one. The KRRRA needs a community member to take the leadership on this, and guidance should be sought on how best to proceed. Our submission needs extending. Sheila Westley will liase with Brent and Fraser Lampen about bundling our submission with others..
- There is a petition online at [change.org](https://www.change.org). Janine will put the link on KT Katchup. As many community members as possible are encouraged to sign this petition.

## Council's Long Term Plan

The community is encouraged to come up with strong ideas on TCDC's capital expenditure for their 2020 budget.

Discussion arising:

- speed on SH 25: there is no police monitoring, and the flashing sign by the Domain has an effect on westbound traffic only
  - NZTA has been written to, requesting the speed limit be reduced to 50kph from Hilldale Cres to Pumpkin Flat (the population & use of the area has changed since their last assessment was made). KRRRA is awaiting a response, following which we can request an on-site meeting to discuss speed limits and also pedestrian-crossing road markings by the tennis court and at Pumpkin Flat where the school bus stops.
- traffic calming/shared traffic zone through village: Matt Busch at TCDC is not opposed in principle to the idea but wants a firm proposal to consider. This is an opportunity for our community to put its creative artistic quirky stamp on a really important bit of infrastructure - artists & creative types, we need your help! Plantings, road-side artwork, painted surf-board signs... these sorts of things can calm the traffic through the village in a visually appealing and uniquely Kuaotunu way, instead of speed-limit signs. A coordinated approach in terms of materials and themes etc would be best, incorporating the revamped toilet also (more on that below).
  - Michael Smither and Gian Macgregor have agreed to help replace the stolen Kiwi signs
- toilet refurbishment - the Council is going to revamp the Toroa Reserve toilet block. This is another opportunity for us to be involved: murals, some sort of artistic finish -
  - KT Ketchup received some ideas on this but the conversation was closed after some inappropriate posts were made
  - KRRRA should be more aware of Ketchup discussions - but, equally, the community is encouraged to contact KRRRA directly with good ideas
  - Janine will bring the idea to the next 10 Artists' meeting for input
- above-ground power lines - could these be replaced as part of the village traffic issue? (Power poles down SH25 towards boat ramp have been out of commission for some time but NZTA won't remove them unless the residents (?) pay for it.)
- footpaths - these may have come up before in KRRRA meetings?! -
  - the footpath between the boat ramp and the village has suffered more delays.
  - some residents feel the priority should be the village-to-Pumpkin Flat (*not* the boat ramp) road as that's where more schoolchildren are affected
  - KRRRA has been lobbying on this issue for decades and will continue to do so
  - the safer walkway south from the village is continuing to be used and maintained - thanks, locals, for looking after that

## **Emergency Response Questionnaire**

This has already gone out electronically, and we have received a few responses; hard copies are available at this meeting and will be in Nina's shop; they will also be delivered by hand to mailboxes over the next few weeks. Response is optional but the more information the local Emergency Response groups have (eg special medical needs, available resources), the better able the whole community will be to deal with and recover from any sort of emergency.

## **Dark Skies**

Did you know that years and years ago the Aurora Australis was visible from Kuaotunu? Also, in truly dark skies, clouds appear black, because there is a constant faint sky-glow behind them.

Alastair recently attended the International Dark Skies conference, and reported back to the meeting. Kuaotunu has dark sky quality equal to that of Tekapo and Great Barrier Island - but once that quality is lost it's lost forever. Becoming a designated Dark Skies area is a long and involved process, beginning with assessing the kind of lighting we have and how to remediate it if necessary. Council and NZTA have to become involved; there needs to be some policy changes re street lighting for example. We would also like to be consulted before street lights are installed so we can say if we want them or not, and what sort: shielding and colour-temperature need to be taken into consideration. Blue-light LEDs are commonly used but are the worst kind of light; amber LEDs are available and much better. Steve Butler, Head of the Royal Astronomy Society of NZ's Dark Skies Group, will be staying with Alastair for the Transit of Mercury (12 November), and Alastair will discuss with him the process for applying for designation and possibly set up a meeting with members of KRRRA.. The meeting is in favour of keeping our Dark Skies.

## **Website update**

Much work has been done on the new kuaotunu.nz website and it should be live by Christmas. Community members who can contribute to content should contact Kathy - Dave Fitzgerald has been helping with the conservation/trapping page, in response to ideas from our last Public Meeting; Courteny Linnecar is going to facilitate a local-profiles page; anyone can nominate a friend or neighbour who they'd like to see profiled.

The current KT Ketchup photo competition - the Essence of Kuaotunu - winning photo will be featured on the website.

## **AOB**

Waitaia Road Forestry extraction - Steve Brown Douglas, spokesperson of the residents' group, reported (via text to Brent) no new developments. KRRRA has offered to facilitate a meeting between the Forestry Syndicate and the Waitaia residents but has not yet been requested to do so. Residents present here are keen to have a meeting - they should communicate this to SBD.

Erosion & re-planting post-flood - KT community should have input in how this goes forward. Brent in his upcoming meeting with Allan Tiplady (TCDC) will ask about this.

Toroa Reserve parking - water's-edge parking should be limited for H&S reasons following the recent significant erosion, but should parking on the reserve be prohibited altogether? It's a lovely piece of public land being used as a parking lot. But it's nice in summer for families to be able to picnic by their cars. The reserve is blocked to vehicles in the winter by a bollard; and common sense might prevent folks from parking too close to the edge?

Blackjack Boat ramp - it was damaged in the storm, and some people were using the sandy foot-access path to drive down and launch from the beach - can this be prevented?

Brent has already met with TCDC Reserves chap Hirini; this path will be blocked to vehicles, as will the area further along the beach which has been used regularly as Sea-Legs access.

Related point: the area used by a holiday resident as Sea-Legs parking actually falls within that property's boundary.

Bridge repair - John Scott has concerns that the method of repair has restricted the water flow, and will increase the incidence of major flooding.

Waikato Regional Council - Len Salt recommends that Dennis Tegg (WRC) be invited to future meetings as he's keen to get stuck in and support communities.

Rubbish compactor - has never worked, is still not working, will probably never work; Brent has contacted TCDC multiple times with no resolution. The meeting requests that the compactor be removed. Brent to follow this up with Allan Tiplady.

KT hill picnic pull-off - this site should be closed as it is used primarily as a rubbish dump. Brent to follow up with AT.

**Finally**, please remember that the KRRRA represents **you**, so get involved, contact us with good ideas (or bad ones, we're not fussy) - and feel free to attend & speak at our committee meetings, held the third Thursday of the month, 6pm, at either Kua Kawhe or the Fire Brigade. We'll endeavour to post the agenda a week ahead so you know what's up. And make sure you read the Action Summary on the next page - you're on it!!

Thanks for coming and see you next time.

**Meeting closed 5pm-ish**

## ACTION SUMMARY

who	what
KRRA committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● clarify “purpose” wording on CP</li> <li>● purchase Te R half-pipe &amp; organise relocation</li> <li>● post committee-meeting agendas ahead of time</li> </ul>
Brent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● work with Sheila &amp; Fraser re spat farm submission</li> <li>● discuss with AT:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ reserve re-planting post flood</li> <li>○ please remove boat ramp rubbish compactor</li> <li>○ close the picnic pull-off at the top of the KT hill, as people only ever use it to dump huge amounts of rubbish</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Janine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● put link to spat farm petition on KT Ketchup</li> <li>● raise idea of toilet-block art with 10 Artists (and traffic-calming?)</li> </ul>
Gael, Martin, Ian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● give specific feedback re Community Plan</li> </ul>
the whole community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● come up with ideas for traffic-calming installations in the village</li> <li>● come up with ideas for artsy finish to toilet block</li> <li>● put hands up to contribute content to the fab new website</li> <li>● keep coming to meetings &amp; giving input</li> </ul>
Waitaia residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● communicate with SBD and request KRRA-facilitated meeting re logging road</li> </ul>
Sheila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● work with Brent &amp; Fraser re spat farm submission</li> </ul>
Alastair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● meet with man from Dark Skies to open discussion on designation process</li> </ul>