

# Kuaotunu Biosphere Group

## Notes from meeting 31/07/21 at BP Home, Kuaotunu

### Attendees

Joe Davis (JD) Ngati Hei  
Brent Page (BP) – Kuaotunu Ratepayers Association  
Chris Severne (CS) – Opito Bay Ratepayers Association  
Nick Kelly (NK) – Department of Conservation  
Kate Nielsen (KN) – Kuaotunu Ratepayers Association  
Paul Cook (PC) – Opito Bay Ratepayers Association  
Dean Glen (DG) – Otama Ratepayers Association

### Apologies

Cameron Fleming (CF) – Otama Ratepayers Association

Abbreviations: NgH – Ngati Hei, DoC – Department of Conservation, KP – Kuaotunu Peninsula, CP – Coromandel Peninsula

### Introduction

BP summarized key points from the Hui, including:

- Some groups fear a loss of independence – don't want to be told what to do
- Need to recognize KEA stance on residual poisons
- Two key partners both under resourced (DoC, NgH) – doing their best to partner together
- Community will have to act in support

It was noted that the Lord Howe Island eradication project initially had only 52%/48% majority in favour – they went ahead and focused strongly on bringing the community with them.

NK highlighted the priorities for DoC on the peninsula, namely the Islands, Dunes, and Forest range. He noted that out of 50,000 EMUs (environmental management units) in NZ, many of the top 50 were located on the peninsula.

For this group a simple focus would be to bring seabirds back to the Peninsula.

DG talked about the progress that has been made – an example is the Otama dunes which in the 1980's were "attacked" with an excavator to determine whether they could be quarried for sand – now there is a significant protection programme in place.

### What is the Biosphere Group role?

There was a question raised at the Hui as to whether the working group actually represents the community. It was agreed that the group does represent the community as evidenced by the mandate from the three ratepayer groups, but does not represent the other individual groups operating on the peninsula.

The discussion then focused on whether we should build and communicate a vision for the group, or just agree and execute some activities that would not create concerns with the various groups. There was agreement we should focus on “getting some runs on the board” to demonstrate value, and JD indicated that he would be happy to see the Scallop rahui as a win for the group, and it should be promoted as such.

It was noted that the groups are all focused on terrestrial activities, rather than marine. Should we adopt a marine focus? NK noted that a healthy terrestrial environment has a major impact on marine health, which is also impacted by specific marine policies.

JD noted his roles with Sea Change and the Hauraki Forum which supported the idea of a marine focus.

CS noted that NEXT Foundation are taking a significant role in funding Pest Free activity. How can we take advantage of this opportunity – we need to demonstrate readiness and capability, but also decide between doing actual work or taking a facilitator role.

BP felt that we need to agree and establish the pillars, and prepare a document setting out our aspirations under each pillar, and strategies to achieve these aspirations.

#### Review of Pillars

BP put forward some aspirations for the pillars, and these were discussed and refined to:

- A healthy, restored, plentiful sustainable marine environment
- Invasive flora and fauna free
- Healthy, clean water systems
- International Dark Sky recognition

There was significant discussion around the pillar which has been characterized as “preserving the culture of small coastal communities”. DG was concerned that this could be used to impact reasonable plans of private landowners by placing excessive restrictions on development. He feels that the current zoning mitigates against further developments such as those recently approved at Opito and Otama. PC was concerned that landowners can apply for zoning changes, and referenced recent submissions on the zoning of land at the eastern and central areas at Opito.

It was recognized that we need to develop a view of this pillar that is acceptable to all parties, and agreed that the discussion would be parked at this stage, but that we would try and bring a group together including local landowners to agree wording and an aspiration that could be widely supported – this probably needs a focused meeting with enough time to properly hear all sides of the issue and develop a suitable framework.

There was a question as to whether we could look at a covenant (or district structure plan) covering the whole peninsula. DG advised that we could put something together and try to get it adopted through standard planning processes. It was agreed that this will be part of a separate discussion.

KN talked about the need to ensure that we incorporated storytelling, the history of the peninsula and environmental learnings into whatever structure plan or covenant we produce.

**Action:** Arrange separate meeting to develop a “Culture” Pillar that sets out an aspiration that can be widely supported – include local landowners in this meeting.

### History

PC and CS discussed the approach that OBRA has previously made to Professor Aroha Harris at Auckland University about using her graduate student class to develop a history of Opito (she did this 2 years ago for the START Charity and the result was an impressive book). Should we approach Aroha again to see if she was interested in doing an appropriate project for the whole peninsula under the guidance of Ngati Hei?

**Action:** PC/CS to contact Aroha Harris re possible History project

### Mapping Project

There was discussion around the previous suggestion to map the groups and activities operating across the peninsula. DG noted that the GIS used by the council already incorporated many relevant overlays, and was accessible by the public. NK also noted that DoC has GIS licenses which may be available to use together with the TCDC overlays to build the requisite mapping to include geography, covenants, historical sites, social overlay, groups, landowners etc.

**Action:** NK to investigate use of DoC GIS licenses to build an initial repository for the peninsula.

### Aspirations and Strategies

KN asked whether we could we find and fund someone to start building a document outlining our aspirations, status, pillars, potential strategies etc.

PC noted the opportunity to use Masters students to do this sort of work if it could be incorporated as a project in their course activities. JD has contacts at University of Waikato who could be interested.

It was agreed the scope would need to include the islands and cultural history as well as the Kuaotunu Peninsula, and that the Haida Gwaii document and the Seachange information repository would provide important frameworks and resources to assist.

The objective would be to produce a “multi-tier” document:

- a simple component to assist with initial high-level communications and funding applications
- a more complete statement of the pillars, key issues and aspirations under those pillars
- Some initial views on strategies and actions to achieve those aspirations.

Although referred to as a document, it would be expected to include additional resources, such as video, website etc.

**Action:** PC to produce and circulate draft Terms of Reference for production of a document outlining aspirations, pillars etc

### Pest Free Peninsula

CS referenced the Lord Howe project and the [proliferation of traps required to achieve eradication – if we want to achieve Pest Free Kuaotunu we will need to do more than just traps – poison or maybe a Pest Proof Fence.

A discussion on the fence highlighted potential benefits – e.g., employment opportunities and also issues such as cost (estimated at \$1m per km) and the need to gain landowner support and potentially permission. NK also highlighted need for maintenance and continuing trapping required, and also noted issues of other incursion such as from boats, cars etc.

It was suggested we should look at the Maungatautere Fence to give an idea of costs, benefits and issues.

JD raised a concern as to whether this would suggest the peninsula was “a gated community”.

### Summary of Actions

Action No	Description	Resp	Due by	Status
<b>A001</b>	Arrange separate meeting to develop a “Culture” Pillar that sets out an aspiration that can be widely supported – include local landowners	<b>BP, DG, NK</b>	ASAP	
<b>A002</b>	Investigate use of DoC GIS licenses to build an initial repository for the peninsula.	<b>NK</b>	31/10/21	
<b>A003</b>	Contact Aroha Harris re possible History project	<b>CS, PC</b>	31/8/21	
<b>A004</b>	Circulate draft Terms of Reference for production of a document outlining aspirations, pillars etc	<b>PC</b>	31/8/21	
<b>A005</b>	Investigate Maungatautere Pest Proof Fence – cost, process, issues etc	<b>CS</b>	30/11/21	
<b>A006</b>	Arrange next Biosphere Meeting	<b>BP</b>	30/9/21	
<b>A007</b>	Circulate Marine Plan ex Haida Gwaii document	<b>KN</b>	ASAP	