

Minutes of meeting for OBRRA held on 23 October 2022 @ 5pm
at Helicopter Shed, Blackjack Road, Opito Bay, Coromandel

Present: Chris Severne (Chair), Paul Cook, Craig Roe, Cheryle Parker-Willoughby, Sue Edens, Glenn Sycamore, Sue Edens, Cassie Roe, Jim Kriechbaum, Roger Gwynne, Terry Costello, Helen Halliwell, Nicola Sycamore, Anne June, Bob & Lynette Simms, Aaron Power, Wally Leighton, Geoff Martin,

Apologies: Scott Montgomery, Brian King, Christine Pullin, Chris Mygind, Perry Cornish, Jeff Wilson, Neil Opperman, Maurice Ellett, Nathan Tessler, Amy Hyde, Brett Hyde, Edward Scorgie, Johnny Teat. **Sue/Paul**

Minutes of previous meeting held 17th April 2022 confirmed **Aaron/Grant**

Matters arising from the Minutes – no matters arising, updates covered under Agenda items.

Treasurer's Report

Paul - OBRA Current Bank balance \$25,000. Funds allocated against previous projects \$9K and subscriptions in advance. We do have funds in the bank but still require subscriptions to be paid and signing up more residents to join, helps us progress plans outlined.

Chris - We are seeing some huge benefits of what is being done, spending on good projects. Also planning to reach out to other funders to get more funds for Pest Control and other activities. Bird life is starting to increase which is great to see, much more ahead of where we were five years ago.

Currently there are 300 residents at Opito Bay (approx. 50% are current members), 6 ratepayers signed up from the Sands, we will communicate progress that has benefits to the whole community e.g., Liasing and advocating for ratepayers to the Council, planting to avoid coastal erosion, eradication of wilding pines, laying more traps and monitoring for pest control, dark sky initiative, biosphere collaboration, rahui, fishing & sports days, family barbeque etc.

We are sending out a newsletter pre-Xmas and hope to get email addresses for those who have not yet joined us and see the benefits. Please pass on any contacts you may have or get them to contact our Treasurer Paul Cook on paul.cook@me.com We have a website now <https://Opitobay.nz>

Treasurer's Report accepted

Glenn/Roger

Rahui

Chris - Our own research was conducted and funded by ourselves and other close by communities. NIWA came in about two weeks after we did ours and encouraged Minister David Parker to put in a 'no take area'. This was successful and was expanded to neighbouring coastlines. Currently 500,000 Ha (45% of the Hauraki Gulf is under a no scallop take rahui)

What do we do after the two years finishes, is now the issue to discuss and see where we go from here? Concern is once the rahui finishes it will be 'open season' at Opito and we will lose the scallops again.

Grant – NZ Sports Fishing Council, total commercial and recreational ban has another year to run to end of September 2023. Keen to know what the plans and thoughts, looking at opening of that season. What is the process to go through for the outcome, a critical decision. Two beds off Little

Barrier, Colville still able to be fished.. Ngati Hei and others outlining how important these beds are. A healthy Scallop population will broadcast spawn. Healthy beds mean more spawning to create new beds. Asking for closer monitoring until Ministry does further research, where the spat are coming from. Letter sent, awaiting response.

Lobbying going on for net and bottom trawling Greater Hauraki Gulf region. If successful commercial dredging of the beds of scallops will be banned. They will have to look at other ways for commercial fishing these areas (diving).

Proper reassessment will be done by NIWA, they went to deep areas in Colville to survey the beds, nature of topography and environment and to identify the scallops. Independent science data on the status of the beds and estimate of biomass. Data previously on Commercial trawling data only.

If Research found to be Detrimental on beds Government would need to put a halt to dredging. Timeline next June highly likely parties involved will be asking for a continual no take period. Can ask for two-year continuance if scallop beds have not recovered.

Opito Bay scallop bed seems to be showing some recovery. NIWA to measure.

Terry – maybe half area of the Bay be a ‘no take area’. How long does it take for scallop to grow? (three years to maturity and legal size)

Biosphere/Dark Sky Initiative

Paul - Funding \$50K Destination Hauraki, initial target of getting completed by June 2023. Formal consultation for Plan Change. This will not be a big deal for the community as 95% will be compliant, only material issue will be where people have upward faced external lights. We have ten years to get to stage of compliance. Guidelines published later. Dark Sky to get official recognition, good quality tourism for the whole area. Rings Beach, Kuaotunu, Otama, Opito, Matapaua areas. Extend later to other areas (Northern Coromandel) if property owners wish it..

Chris - Dark Sky events, Matariki Weekend attendance 60-70 who watch through the telescopes – Saturn, Jupiter, Moon, Milky Way etc. Looking at doing another watch in the New Year, will invite the community to come and look through the telescopes.

Wilding Pines Project

Grants available for our area = \$375K - \$50K Opito Bay, felling, drilling and poisoning pines. Around the coastal areas, hard to get more funding in future. Kuaotunu group, Project Kiwi, Otama group. Keep areas pest free. Hard area is Blackjack Road, looking up from Otama lots of mature wilding pines are dieing after being poisoned in that area. Landowners doing some work and along with the logging also trying to reduce the problem of wilding pines.

Logging of Vela forest stopped now and begins again in the New Year. Environment Waikato is co ordinating wilding pine removal. Around Opito work has been completed around Sandy Bay through to Matapaua Bay. *Remember if you see a wilding pine anywhere just hand pull it out (if small enough) or cut it off at the base so no green growth is left)*

Aaron Power our wilding pine Co-Ordinator spends a lot of time on Project Kiwi. Kiwi in and around Opito Bay are thriving thanks to Craig and his volunteer team carrying out an aggressive pest control programme (*Remember if you wish to donate funds to help our pest control programme contact Craig on craig@rys.co.nz*). Kiwi can now be heard around our properties which is wonderful.. **Dogs**

are a huge risk to kiwi. Dog Aversion Training days to be circulated encourage dog & owners to attend

Pest Control

Craig - Marge & Rachel 7.5 hours to do the circuit, 2 days a week. During lockdown 53 days, thought DOC were checking traps, soon realised only 11 serviced every few months. During lock down, two years have had **1124 kills** as at today. 60 local business and families have donated traps, we can put on our website. If you would like to sponsor a trap \$140 to supply and set up the trap, consumables and lures volunteers doing a great job but any donation \$20, \$50 accepted. Ideally would like to have 250 traps divided into smaller groups and lines, in the next six months for allocated persons to check while out walking. Responding via App, training available.

Paul – Craig and team doing a great job with pest control.

Chris – Kaka, kereru, tui, bellbird and morepork seen more often thanks to our pest control team.

Craig –Stu Richie, Keith Richardson, Joe Scott Woods, Brian Thompson, the leaders working for years doing pest control and clearing tracks. Joe Scott Woods still working and helping collect wood for the walkway even when he wasn't well and retired. Always helping recycling timber and fixing bridges etc.

Cassie –

Little Bush track marked *paua shells*, quartz crystals in the Stewart Stream, hot springs felt underfoot when walking in the Stream.

Sandy Bay marked *scallop shells*, views from ridge spectacular before the trees grow

Whiskey Creek – talk to us about the track for the adventurous!

Waterfall – 40mins walk from Matapaua Bay Road

Map for OBRA members to show guests around a newsletter group to organise. Don't want track details widely circulated as will become too busy and will need Health and Safety signage .

Craig - **How can you help?** Pick up rubbish, get kids involved. Help clear the tracks, take secateurs maybe 10 metres do a little. Weeds still need to be done continually. Identify plants etc.

Raft Anchor needs finding, after storm broken with chain attached on seabed floor, needed for the platform. Maybe some divers can go and help search for it?

Geoff - Margie & Rachel the amount of work they do 2 days a week, can we do something to help reimburse them for all their efforts and time?

Cheryle – We discussed this at the Committee meeting previously, looking how we can help them.

Terry - Rachel & Margie – save milk bottle tops for their traps as they need them for baiting.

Spat Farm

Chris – Environmental decision in a few weeks.

(Decision has come out. The spat farm requires new ropes and ties every time the spat is taken up {expensive} and harvested. The applicant will need to consider this before proceeding)

General Business

Roger – Fishing Contest had a quick response. We have new people helping, but could do with a few more to help manage spreadsheet for weigh in etc. Please let me know if you can assist.

Cheryle – Sports Day calling out for new helpers. Asking for new families to help and support the running of the day, due to our family doing it for 20-30 years. It would be great if more people could take on certain roles which makes a fun day! Please email: cherylewilloughby@icloud.com to ensure its success.

Newsletter will be sent out by email in the next four weeks. Please pay your subscription \$50 annual fee, to keep progressing these great achievements. **Meeting finished at 6pm**