



Opito Bay Ratepayers' Association

General Meeting Minutes

Sunday 29th January 2023, 5pm – By Zoom

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Present Chris Severne (CS), Paul Cook (PC), Cheryle Parker (CP), Glen Sycamore (GS), Qwilton Biel, Terry Costello (TC), John Reece, Gabrielle McKone, Duncan Macintosh, Chris Mygind, Grant Northcott (GN)(CM)

2. Apologies

Apologies received Perry Cornish, Sue Edens, Johnny Teat, Nathan Tesselaar, Craig Roe, Ed Scorgie, Bruce Gillespie, Laurie Newhook, Paul Donovan, Chris Rutherford, Chris Pullin, Fiona Taler, Aaron Power

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read and it was moved to accept them (Moved CS, Seconded TC) – Agreed

4. Inwards / Outwards Correspondence

4.1 Mail received from a ratepayer requesting consideration be given to leaving the fallen Pohutakawa tree branch in place to see if it survived and provided a play / shaded area. (another ratepayer has offered to cut up and dispose of the branch). Also suggesting Pohutakawas could be planted along the dunes at regular intervals to enhance the natural look of the Bay.

CR noted that pohutakawas were already self seeding well along the dunes.

GS asked whether there was a safety risk with the tree in its present state, or if it was left.

Some general discussion as to whether it may impact on some views, and what the overall feeling in the Bay might be.

Action Agreed: CS should talk to TCDC arborist for opinion, and possibly talk to properties affected to determine if they had strong views either way.

4.2 Note received from Sam Woolford (Legasea) discussing a submission they have made to Fisheries NZ and requesting our support.

4.3 From TCDC re dog bylaws. Opportunity for submitters to present at consultation hearing.

4.4 From TCDC re cars on beaches – speed limit is 10km / hour. Opito is an official road.

5. Treasurers Report

Report as circulated was tabled for comment. Main issue at this stage is future funding for the PFO program, which has been a huge success but will need further support to achieve the next set of objectives.

Motion accepting Treasurer's Report (CM/TC) agreed

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6. Scallop Rahui

CS read an update from Sam Woolford, noting that the entire fishery is currently closed for the next three months.

Fisheries have opened a consultation on future plans for the scallop fishery, and Legasea advise that their submission proposes:

- Close scallop beds for 3 more years
- Complete ban on dredging on scallop beds (and in the Hauraki Gulf generally?)
- Commitment to appropriate research being undertaken to show population rebuild

NIWA have deployed a camera system into deeper beds which convinced the minister the fisheries are not in a good place. Need research into where the primary spat beds are. Can survey much greater area with the technology.

GN believes it is highly likely that the rahui will be extended.

CS moved that OBRA should make a submission along the lines recommended by Legasea, GN seconded.

CS to circulate proposed submission and encourage individual submissions.

7. Kuaotunu Biosphere Working Group

PC advised that the Dark Sky initiative is now well underway, with funding secured and consultant / project group activity ramping up. Next few months will be critical as we develop the draft plan change, and also build support in the Community. Facebook Group has over 90 members, and website will be live in around 2 weeks.

8. Wilding Pine Project

Aaron Power reported that all the work in the Sandy Bay reserve is complete – other areas 80% complete.

CS noted that he had removed around 100 behind his place and asked people to pull out any small wilding pines they see.

9. PFO

CS presented an update on the PFO programme on behalf of Craig ROE.. Need to record thanks to Biel's for using shed to store Track Access materials. Currently 160 traps deployed, with a further 25 ready to go. Will get some more to address possums on Pa site. 1350 kills recorded to date, and continued outstanding work by CR and team. Thanks recorded to Craig, Richard and Rachel in particular.

Note4d that catches around houses are diminishing, and the team is moving traps into the hinterland. Work is also being done on killing weeds on the tracks. Many more people are using tracks, but we are keen to keep them as an "Opito" facility – don't need too much publicity.

10. Dune Restoration

Been working for the last 4 or 5 years, particularly around the Stewart Stream reserve – grass planted has really held the dune together through this last storm (*note – meeting was prior to cyclone Gabrielle and other events*). Some discussion about moving to Skippers

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stream for more planting, but need to keep focus on Stewart Stream for another year or so. Thanks to volunteers.

Some discussion about accidental damage to dunes, particularly kids who were not aware of the impact playing on them. CS to send a message to parents asking them to ensure kids did not play in or on the dunes with explanation.

11. General Business

11.1 Weather station approved, suggested to add a webcam and fisheye camera for night sky viewing.

11.2 Cars on beach / Community Guidelines

General discussion about what we would like to see in respect of the rules. Important to understand that a total ban on vehicles other than for launch and retrieval would include trips with the grandkids on the tractor tray etc. What we want is for appropriate behaviour to be accepted, which would not include cars, quad bikes etc joyriding. Noted that some ratepayers see nothing wrong with their kids riding quad bikes etc on the beach. Noted that Forest and Bird have just started a national campaign on this issue (to ban all vehicles other than for launch and retrieval). Also noted that TCDC bylaws are somewhat deficient in this matter, but that TCDC signage at the various beach entrances does suggest a large fine is payable for vehicles not doing launch / retrieval.

Agreed that: OBRA will develop a position paper / suggested community guidelines and circulate for comment. Ideal would be for community to be self policing, and communicate to cars etc on the beach for other purposes that they were in breach of community guidelines / TCDC regulations.

11.3 Question from the floor as to when the next Forestry Cut is scheduled? CS replied that nothing known at this stage. The meeting expressed concern about the slash situation- there is still a large amount from the last harvest. There was also a question about the new path on the clay (loop) road with drain work. Agreed that CS will check on both points and report back.