



Waiatarua Community News

800 copies

February 2026

Member Card

WRRA Membership

Renewal notices via email have been sent for those expiring at the end of January and February – these can be paid at the AGM or online account – WRRA 12-3051-0278313-00.

We do appreciate your support; a new membership card will be sent to you on receipt of payment. If you are unsure of your status, please email secretary@waiatarua.org.nz

Please accept my Membership to the Waiatarua Ratepayers & Residents Association 2026

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No: _____

I ENCLOSE:\$20 household

Email: _____

To: Treasurer, WRRA, 911 West Coast Rd, Waiatarua, Auckland, or leave at the library, or email these details to: treasurer@waiatarua.org.nz

Bank details: 12 3051 0278313 00 WRRA

Advantages of being a WRRA member?

Enjoy a 10% discount offered by the friendly local businesses listed below when you show your membership card:

Waitakere Resort & Spa Ph: 814 9622 573 Scenic Drive www.waitakereresort.co.nz

The Landscape Yard Ph: 818 6129 293 West Coast Road, Glen Eden www.thelandscapeyard.co.nz

Henderson Hire Ph: 838 8879 Cnr Railside Ave & View Rd, Henderson www.hendersonhire.co.nz

Other special rates for WRRA members at:

Plyman/Timberman Ph: 021 738420 70 The Concourse, Henderson www.plyman.co.nz

WRRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the WRRA is to be held at the Waiatarua Hall on Tuesday, 17th February 2025. Arrival time for residents is **6.30pm** to enable registration, with the meeting commencing promptly at **7.00pm**.

Attending residents please sign the register on arrival. Membership of the Association can also be renewed on the night - \$20.00 per household. A membership list will be available to advise if you are current, or not.

The Guest Speaker is **Glenn Browne from Auckland Emergency Management** – he is the Community Planning & Readiness Advisor to Waitakere, Henderson-Massey and Whau Local Boards.

The MP for our region, Councillors and Local Board Members have been invited to attend.

Residents will have an opportunity to ask questions, however, it would be appreciated if you can register your question with Mark

Wager, our President ahead of the meeting on email president@waiatarua.org.nz This greatly assists the planning for the evening. Residents will also have the opportunity to speak with our guests following the meeting when refreshments will be served.

The AGM is also the time for Nominations for the Committee; if you are interested in joining our Committee then please contact the Secretary on secretary@waiatarua.org.nz It is a requirement of our Constitution that Committee Members are financial members of the Association. Nominations can be made by a financial member and seconded by a current Committee Member.

Waitakere Forest and Bird Talk:

Thursday 19th February 7:30pm

Monitoring, Citizen Science and finding what information is out there

Join us for a talk by Frazer Dale, The Biodiversity Guy. Former school teacher, Zoo Educator, Mayoral Conservation Award Winner and currently Senior Advisor for Conservation Education at Auckland Council. Knowing what biodiversity is in your local area or near your conservation project is really useful information to know. However, monitoring is often the conservation action we prioritise the least. Come learn how to find out what biodiversity monitoring information is already out there for you to access, how to get help from council, and top tips for doing your own monitoring. Venue: Ranui Community Centre 474 Swanson Rd, Ranui.

Non members welcome, join us for supper to chat with like minded people, free but koha appreciated to cover hall hire. For further information ph Liz 0274 762732 lizanstey@hotmail.com

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or the Waiatarua Ratepayers and Residents Association

Contact Us **Editor:** Erin Kingsleigh-Smith Phone: 021 355 009 Email: editor@waiatarua.org.nz
WRRA President: Mark Wager Phone: 021 354 831 Email: president@waiatarua.org.nz
Community Hall and Library: 911 West Coast Road. Phone: 814 9353
Hall hire bookings: Ram Vijapurapu Email: hallhire@waiatarua.org.nz

Library hours: Thurs 10.00am–12.00pm
Fri 7.00pm–8.00pm Sat 11.00am–12.00pm
Sun 12.30-2.00pm
website: www.waiatarua.org.nz

WRRA thank Marketing Impact Ltd for their support in producing this newsletter www.marketingimpact.co.nz

Volunteer Opportunity: Treasurer – Be the Hero of Our Finances!

Do you enjoy making numbers behave? Love the satisfaction of a tidy spreadsheet? Fancy being the calm, collected guardian of an organisation's financial wellbeing? Then step right up — **we're looking for a volunteer Treasurer!**

As our Treasurer, you'll play a *key* role in keeping our Association running smoothly, transparently, and confidently. Think of yourself as the financial heartbeat of the team — without the stress of a corporate job, but with all the good vibes of helping a community grow!



What's This Role All About?

Elected Role

Each February at our AGM, members elect a Treasurer.

Who You Report To

You'll work closely with our President and support our Members by keeping our finances crystal clear and Constitution-friendly.

What You'll Be Doing (a.k.a. Your Superpowers)

- **Money Maestro:** Handle all income and payments with care and accuracy.
- **Record-Keeping Rockstar:** Keep our financial records up to date and crystal clear.
- **Banking Boss:** Make sure all funds find their way safely into our approved bank accounts.
- **Monthly Marvel:** Prepare and present monthly financial statements at Executive Committee meetings.
- **Update Champion:** Give financial updates (verbal or written) whenever needed.
- **Approval Aficionado:** Oversee expenses and payments through our authorised banking system.
- **End-of-Year Extraordinaire:** Help prepare audited annual accounts for the AGM and nominate an Honorary Auditor.
- **Hall Hero:** Manage hall accounting, including usage stats and accountability reports for the Council.

Time Commitment

- **Monthly magic:** Around **2 hours per month**,
- **End-of-year wizardry:** About **10 hours** for annual accounts and audit prep.

Why Join Us?

You'll be part of a warm, welcoming volunteer community, where your skills make a *real* difference. Whether you're looking to give back, sharpen your financial talents, or simply enjoy being part of something meaningful — this role is a fantastic way to make an impact.

Ready to help keep our organisation thriving?

We'd love to hear from you!

Softening the Wētā: Seeing Waiatarua's Special Species in a New Light

Often described as alien, armoured and uninviting, the tokoriro / Auckland tree wētā is not a creature typically associated with beauty. Sometimes dubbed a cousin of the "God of Ugly Things", its sharp angles and shelly exterior can make it feel inaccessible at first glance. In *Pretty Thing*, fibre artist Kendra Stoner invites us to look again.

Created from cotton thread and linen, *Pretty Thing* is one of 14 works featured in the *Special Species Spotlight* exhibition, presented by the **Pest Free Waitākere Ranges Alliance** in partnership with **Te Kawerau ā Maki**. The campaign pairs local artists with a special species connected to a village or township in the Waitākere Ranges, celebrating local biodiversity through art.

The wētā is Waiatarua's special species, and Stoner's response transforms its spiky, prehistoric form into something unexpectedly gentle. By reimagining the wētā through soft fibres and hand-worked threads, the work challenges viewers to move beyond instinctive reactions of fear or dislike and instead approach the insect with curiosity and care.

The contrast between subject and medium is key. The softness of fibre reframes the wētā's hard exterior, encouraging a deeper appreciation of a species that plays an important ecological role but is often misunderstood or overlooked. In this way, *Pretty Thing* becomes both an artwork and an act of advocacy.



Special Species Spotlight will be on display at **Arataki Visitor Centre** from **Monday 24 January to Sunday 8 February**, before moving to **Upstairs Gallery, Titirangi** from **Friday 13 February to Sunday 1 March**. All 14 works will be auctioned on **Friday 27 February**, offering a unique opportunity to support conservation while celebrating the extraordinary — and sometimes unexpected — beauty of the Waitākere Ranges.

Media Contact:

Michelle Swanepoel, PFWRA Programme Lead

michelle@pfwra.org.nz 0274 994 596

A Little Local History

Wildlife

Probably the main event, wildlife-wise, was wild pigs. Bill Beveridge, who has featured previously in the newsletter, was our local ranger. Bill used to do his rounds in his utility truck with an open back, and he always took his dog with him—a golden Labrador, as I recall.

Bill lived in a Council house at the top of the hill overlooking the Scenic Drive—Piha Road—Quinns Road intersection. The house was accessed via a long metalled driveway from Scenic Drive.

One day, as Bill turned off Scenic Drive onto his driveway, his dog leapt from the back of the ute, crossed Scenic Drive, and bailed up a huge boar right by the road. The boar was extremely large and mauled the dog badly, but Bill managed to kill the boar and rush the dog to the vet. Thankfully, the dog survived.

It was a regular sight to see vehicles emerging—mainly from Piha Road—with wild pigs draped across the bonnet. Large wallows were a favourite of the pigs along a track at the very end of Quinns Road.

There was a colony of Hochstetter's frogs within a small seepage area beside the road leading into the Nihotupu Dam, about half-way down on the right-hand side. I can only wish that they survived and still exist today.

I recall seeing one—and only one—weka in scrub on farmland in the foothills by the stream leading out beside Nihotupu Mountain from that valley. I didn't know what it was at the time; I just knew it was different.

We used to fish all the creeks and streams in the area using a bent pin and cotton as a line. These creeks and streams held what we called “native trout”, which I now know were kōkopu.

Down in the bush between the old boarding house and the shop was a man-made, cement-sided pool fed by a spring. It supplied water for the boarding house and was full of kōura, providing many hours of entertainment for my brother and me.

Eels were a different kettle of fish altogether—larger and requiring more serious fishing gear. I recall seeing giant eels hauled out of the Nihotupu Dam on wire hawsers.

Crime

I see from the newsletter that crime is still ever-present in the area. We had our share back then as well. We would be lying in bed and hear a muffled boom in the distance. After a while, experience taught us that it was safecrackers bringing stolen safes up

into the hills and blowing them open.

A favourite spot for one gang was an area between Bush Road and Tui Crescent, just below a house now occupied by my old friend Frank Warby. They could throw the blown safe over a bank and had numerous points of exit. They were never caught in the hills, at least to my knowledge.

Our shop was burgled on a regular basis. I recall sleeping in the shop with my brother, armed with hockey sticks, in the belated hope that the thieves would return for a second helping. They never did, thank goodness.

Probably the most horrendous and momentous event was when three police officers were shot at a rural property this side of Swanson. While it was some distance away, I recall suddenly seeing police cars tearing past with lights flashing. Roadblocks were set up, and armed police swarmed the area.

Old Sites

There was a book published called *Once the Wilderness* by John T. Diamond. One part described a sawmill situated some distance behind what we knew as the Nihotupu Auxiliary Dam. This dam was located some way into the bush on the left-hand side of Piha Road and fed the stream that passed under the bridge on Piha Road into the main Nihotupu Dam.

My brother and I went searching for the old sawmill and eventually found it. It was heavily overgrown even in those days, but sheds were still visible under the canopy. I recall giant logs still sitting in sluice streams, ready to be flooded out for collection.

There were also sluice dam sites further upstream above the valley beside Nihotupu Mountain (which was a mountain to us, at least).

An area to the right of Nihotupu Mountain must have been farmed in the very early days. In our time, the bush was reclaiming it, but you could still find old buildings and stockyards. I would guess that the stockyards still exist today.

We never found any old Māori sites, and they were never discussed.

*Wayne Chester
Former resident of Waiatarua*



Photo: Hochstetter's frog

Advertising & Community Notices

Commercial advertisements are welcome and can be arranged by contacting Erin Kingsleigh-Smith, editor@waiatarua.org.nz, ph 021 355 009. Community Notices are free to current financial members.

Dance Move Be Well - Dance Therapy Services: Looking for help with mental health, stress, anxiety or neurodivergent? Connect with your emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. Individual and group sessions. www.dancemovebewell.nz

Dead tree management: local available for managing dead, diseased or damaged wood to maintain healthy trees, and tidying up trees that hinder or stop property repairs or that have become a nuisance and reduce aesthetics. Ph Craig Starr 021 610 408.

Gardening Help: experienced, reliable gardener available for casual or ongoing work. Weeding, pruning, planting, lawn tidying, and general garden maintenance. \$30/hour. Friendly, efficient, and local. Call/text Kate on 0276788607 to book a visit or discuss your needs.

Indoor Bowls: every Thursday at the Hall 7pm for 7.15pm start. No experience needed. Coffee and tea provided. \$3 donation to the local food bank and CPNZ. Ph Celia: 814 9660

Oratia Community Church: Sunday services at 9.30am, Kids Club Sunday at 9.30am. Fellowship 2nd Thursday in the Hall at 1pm. All welcome. The Hall is available for community use. Ph. 818 8344

Plants, Crafts etc: Various plants, shrubs, vireyas and bromeliads. Assorted crafts, occasional cards (\$1 to \$3) sewing and knitting including cushions, scarves, aprons, blankets and second hand books. All proceeds to Nepalese Education Trust for Tertiary Scholarships. Ph Margaret or Paddy 814 9859

Seniors dance: Oratia Settlers Hall. Dance for those over 65. Thursdays 12pm-1pm. Pay by term \$120 or \$15 drop in. Email christina@seniorsdance.nz or tel 021 022 37414.

Table Tennis: every Wednesday in the Hall, from 7pm. No experience needed, all equipment supplied. \$2 per week. Ph Dean Rutland 021 0298 3784, rutland4@xtra.co.nz.

Tiler / Stone layer: 30 years experience in the trade available for indoor and outdoor projects large or small. Ph Craig Starr 021 610 408.

Vinyasa flow yoga class: 45 min. Fridays at 8.30am. Small Hall Oratia (behind the Settlers Hall). Bring a mat. \$15/class. Email naomi-hosted@gmail.com with any questions.

Waiatarua Playcentre: Come and have 3 free visits at our bush-nestled Playcentre. We are child led, parent run and full of fun! Open 9:15am - 1.15pm Mon and Weds. Contact waiatarua@playcentre.org.nz or www.facebook.com/waiataruaplaycentre

We are Loud: Modern Music Lessons. Vocals, piano, guitar, ukulele, bass, drums, theory, songwriting & band. Group & private lessons, online & in-person for all ages & skill levels. Visit www.weareloud.co.nz or ph 027 470 7042.

Work To Do: Sort out that 'To Do' list for your House, Garden or Property. Clean Ups, Maintenance, Simple Repairs, Tree Trims, Window Cleans, Painting etc. Local and Reliable. Call Chris 027 600 3977.

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editor@waiatarua.org.nz for
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From the President

I hope you all enjoyed a relaxing Christmas break and that 2026 has started well for you and your families. For me personally, I've come to realise that the type of Christmas present you receive is a fairly reliable indicator of how old people think you are. You know you're getting older when people start buying you socks and deodorant. But you know you're really getting old when you're genuinely pleased about it and quietly thinking, "That's actually quite useful."

A new year always brings with it a sense of possibility. It's a natural pause point where we take stock of where we've been and start imagining where we might go next. For Waiatarua, 2026 is shaping up to be a year of momentum — building on what we already do well, strengthening connections, and continuing to add value to this very special community we're fortunate to be part of.

One of the things that continues to make Waiatarua unique is the way people show up for each other. Our events are a great example of that. In 2026, we're planning to bring back the activities that have become real highlights on the community calendar — including our much-loved quiz nights, the Waiatarua Photographer of the Year competition, and the ever-popular Waiatarua Cutest Pets competition. Each year these events grow in participation and enthusiasm, and there's no reason to think 2026 will be any different. They're not just about fun; they're about connection, shared stories, and strengthening the sense that Waiatarua is more than just a place we live — it's a community we belong to.

Alongside this, we remain determined to ensure Waiatarua's voice is heard. Too often, small communities can be overlooked, and we are committed to advocating strongly on your behalf with Auckland Council and the Local Board. In 2026, we'll continue pursuing grant opportunities so we can deliver more events, improve facilities, and ensure our community hall remains a vibrant hub for gatherings, celebrations, and shared experiences. Speaking of the hall, one of the real highlights of the year ahead will be seeing the completion of the renovations. It will be a huge moment to

watch the scaffolding finally come down and to welcome everyone back into a fully reopened, refreshed community space. The hall has always been the heart of Waiatarua, and seeing it restored and revitalised will be something we can all take pride in.

None of this happens without ideas, energy, and involvement from the community itself. If you have suggestions for events, activities, or ways we can continue to add value to Waiatarua, I would genuinely love to hear from you. Your ideas help shape what we do and ensure we're creating a community that reflects the people who live here. Here's to a positive, connected, and inspiring 2026 for Waiatarua. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at events throughout the year and continuing to build something special together.

Would You Like to Become President?

The Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers Association (WRRA) is a democratic community organisation, and one of its greatest strengths is welcoming new voices and fresh ideas. With our upcoming AGM in February, there is an opportunity for anyone who may be interested in stepping into the role of President.

This year will be my fourth AGM in the role, and it feels like a natural moment to invite new energy and perspectives if someone feels ready to contribute in this way. Being President isn't about having all the answers — it's about caring for Waiatarua, listening to the community, and helping bring people together.

If you've ever been curious about becoming more involved, I'd be very happy to have a conversation and talk through what the role involves — no pressure and no expectations. And if no one feels ready to step forward this year, I'm equally happy to put my hand up for another term. Either way, what matters most is that WRRA continues to be a welcoming place where people feel encouraged to help shape Waiatarua's future.

*Mark Wager
President
Waiatarua Ratepayers & Residents Association*

Waiatarua Community Patrol News

Tēnā koutou Waiatarua.

Just like that, our summer holidays have come to an end.

The Community Patrol has been part of Operation Speedo over the summer. This is a joint safety initiative between the Council, Police, Surf Lifesaving, FENZ and many other organisations with the aim to reduce crime and accidents across the Waitakere ranges and west coast beaches & parks. It has been running successfully for about 8 years.

Another issue that has been cropping up (or down) recently is potholes. If you have one by your place call Auckland Transport on 093553553 or report online at <https://at.govt.nz/about-us/street-maintenance/road-and-footpath-maintenance>

Be aware of our volunteers and give us a wave when you see us out on patrol.

Volunteer with us as a patroller (covering Waiatarua, Oratia, Henderson Valley and more). A flexible commitment of around four hours per month. Full training and uniform supplied. Police security clearance check and current drivers licence required. Volunteer with us in a support role. It takes a team to keep our wheels on the road.

Our biggest expense is petrol – donate directly to our fuel account at Oratia Mobil station on West Coast Road or donate to our

Givealittle page – no amount is too small: www.givealittle.co.nz/org/waiatarua-community-patrol-charitable-trust



Contact waiatarua@cpnz.org.nz for more information, or check out our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/waiataruacomunitypatrol>.

Remember – please phone Police to report any incidents in our neighbourhood including witnessing bad driving. This enables Police to identify trends in the area and does get included in their planning activities:

*Barbara Lokes
Treasurer, Waiatarua Community Patrol*

MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

**Copy needs to be with the Editor
by 5pm on FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY**

Come and visit Rose Hellaby House

Put the weekend of 18/19 April in your diary and look forward to the opening of Rose Hellaby House on Scenic Drive in Waiatarua. Rose's Horace Massey-designed house and grounds have been undergoing a fix-up and tidy-up by an enthusiastic gang of volunteers and Auckland Council regional parks' team.

In 2025, regional parks agreed to a lease with the Pest Free Waitākere Ranges Alliance who will use the house as its headquarters and hub for the many environmental groups that work on keeping public and private land in the Waitākere Ranges free of plant and animal pests. "Being based at Rose Hellaby House gives us an incredible opportunity to be at the heart of the community, fostering stronger connections as we work together to protect and restore the Waitākere Ranges," says Alliance Coordinator, Michelle Swanepoel.



biosecurity team polished up the heritage bookcases and tables before Christmas and put them in place. It's a work in progress with the aim of having information and displays regularly open to the public.

Saturday 18th April is the formal opening with formalities. Sunday 19th is open house with stalls from our local groups. So put it in your diary and look out for more info before the day.

For more information contact Michelle Swanepoel michelle@pfwra.org.nz

Sandra Coney

Photos (all courtesy Sandra Coney) clockwise from top:

Biosecurity team help polish furniture to go into Rose Hellaby House.

Flower beds flourishing in the front of the house

Rose's house has beautiful wooden walls and floors



With advice from experts at the Botanic Gardens, and led by parkland nursery manager Brendan Mackie, a planting plan has been devised and is being implemented by volunteers who meet twice monthly. The plants chosen are in keeping with the period in which Rose Hellaby lived in her house. The house and grounds were willed by Rose to the Auckland Regional Authority and were transferred to it on her death in 1974. Plantings have flourished in soil newly enriched with compost. Even Rose's vege garden has had a makeover, but not before giving up buckets of potatoes.

Inside, the house is barely changed from Rose's day and gifted furniture has helped make the very woody house more homely. Volunteers from the Council's



Get Ahead at the Waiatarua Community Library

January always feels a little like a preview season. This is the time of year when the major streaming platforms roll out trailers and teasers for the shows and films we can expect later in 2026. If you're an Amazon Prime subscriber, you might be looking forward to a new season of Alex Cross, season two of The Terminal List, or the return of Jack Reacher. Over on Netflix, there's excitement building for the next film in The Thursday Murder Club series, and even more buzz around a new adaptation of the classic novel East of Eden, starring Florence Pugh.

If any of that has caught your attention, there is some good news — you don't have to wait. And even better, you don't have to pay.

All of the titles just mentioned began life as books, and many of them are available right now, completely free, to members of our community through the Waiatarua Community Library. That means you can discover the story first, get to know the characters in more depth, and perhaps even enjoy quietly knowing what happens before your friends have seen the screen version.

The scaffolding around the hall can make the library easy to overlook at the moment, but it is very much still open and very much worth a visit. Inside, there's a genuine treasure trove waiting for you — gripping thrillers, classic novels, modern favourites, and plenty of unexpected discoveries you might not have planned on borrowing. So instead of waiting months for the next big release to drop on your screen, why not get ahead? Pop down to the Waiatarua Community Library, take your time browsing the shelves, and enjoy the simple pleasure of a great story — for free, and right here in your own community.

You might just find your next favourite book before it becomes your next favourite show.