



Waīatarua Community News

850 copies

October 2021

From the President

Hi all

By the time you read this we will hopefully be out of lockdown and be at least at Level 2. Not sure about the rest of you but this has seemed like a long 5 weeks. Living on Brabant Road, my daily routine includes walking my two Labradors either up towards Mountain Road and back or down to Elevation and back. Some observations I have made and thoughts I have had during these walks are:

Lots of cars, lots of bicycles and more motorbikes than ever before. As you know this is a small stretch of road so not convinced that all the traffic comes from locals. Vehicles parked up at the lookouts and more reports of thefts and cars being broken into than usual;

The recent major storm and subsequent rainfall has impacted greatly on our roads and particularly the roadsides;

As I walk down to Elevation on what was once a footpath I see that the mudslides are coming ever closer to the road with the verge side disappearing. Only a matter of time I think;

In some areas like the corner opposite the Waitakere Lodge entrance the vegetation including some sizable trees are hanging over the road ready to fall at any time;

I also think of the many residents that have had their properties damaged by the storm and how that has added to what is already a difficult situation during a level 4 lockdown.

I guess the point of the rambling above is to highlight from my perspective what is happening locally. Most obviously for us I suggest is the importance of the local community keeping watch, keeping in touch and watching out for, our surrounding neighbours. Being there to support those who need assistance and advice or simply offering a friendly ear is important.

At our latest Executive meeting it was suggested that once we get out of lockdown we arrange a community event at the Hall. Residents can share their experiences during lockdown and from the storm. We can have our local contractors along as well to perhaps offer some advice and also arrange to have a couple of speakers. We would value input from those affected as to the most important advice they might need. Peter Casey has agreed to organise this event so please send any ideas or comments to secretary@waiatarua.org.nz.

We would like to welcome Catherine Wells to the Executive Committee. Cathie, who lives in Brabant Road has been involved with the Association and the Community Hall for many years and is currently revamping our website so please have a look, it is looking really good. Cathie would also welcome stories and photos as would Erin, our Newsletter Editor. We also welcome Lyn Chappell on to the Executive in the role of Secretary. This is excellent news for me as I can now pass on that task and concentrate on being

President.

Thank you to everyone who offered their time to support the Wasp Weekend initiative. It is amazing for us to have too many volunteers. For those who missed out, do not despair— Rita has lots of ideas and I am sure she will find you a job if you remain in contact.

Over the past few months we have had two very positive meetings of the Joint RRA's. For those who might not be aware of these they are as follows:

Waīatarua, Titirangi, Langholm, Preserve The Swanson Foothills, Parau, Glen Eden, Henderson Valley, Piha, Oratia, Woodlands Park, South Titirangi and Karekare.

We have a unique situation here and an opportunity as a collective to make a difference. We have agreed some overarching priority issues that might affect us as a Collective. We have grouped these at present into 5 headings and delegated these as sub committees. These headings are Environment, Transport, Land and Parks, The Heritage Trust Act and Emergency Management. Next steps will be to appoint Chairs to each sub group, appoint sub group members and rank the documented priorities under each group. We are to meet again in early October to finalise this initiative and agree some protocols around meetings and interaction with the Local Board and Local Council. Needless to say we will keep you informed of progress and my hope will be to share the priorities in more detail once finalised.

Once again I remind you that we are elected to your Executive to try and make this beautiful Heritage area that you have chosen to live in, a better place. Not for just us, but the future generations who may choose to live 26 kilometres from the biggest city in beautiful, peaceful and tranquil bushlands. To do this we require your input and support. You do not need to commit to the Executive committee to help. You can simply contact one of the Committee or email your suggestions and ideas to the secretary or to me at president@waiatarua.org.nz.

Stay safe and well.

Tom Hoey



Above: One of the many recent landslides in the Ranges.

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

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Hall hire bookings: Matt Smith Phone: 021 059 3467 Email: hallhire@waiatarua.org.nz

Library hours: Thursday 10.00am–12.00pm

Friday 7.00pm–8.00pm

Saturday and Sunday 11.00am–12.00pm

website: www.waiatarua.org.nz

Resident Advice on Landslides from local business, Proline Plumbing & Gas

Following the terrible storms over the past few weeks, I feel prompted to write as some of you may have suffered some form of earth movement or landslip on your property and are not exactly sure of how to proceed.

I'm sure many of you would have contacted your insurance company who in turn may have contacted the EQC, local council, or their contractors, but you may be wondering—where to from here?

In my experience in dealing with these situations it is very easy to become the forgotten party although you are almost certainly the person that is being impacted the most.

My recommendation in this instance would be to contact an independent, specialist company to complete an assessment, for example companies such as Ormiston Associates. Firms such as these who specialise in geotechnical/geological problems and particularly landslip investigation, will be able to provide you with an expert,

unbiased, factual assessment of the damage sustained to your property. It is likely they will be able to determine the reasons why it happened i.e. blocked stormwater drains and provide solutions to rectify the problem along with the costs involved. This will give you as the homeowner an independent report highlighting from an educated perspective what, how and why the problems arose, and from this you will be in a much better position to talk to the powers that be regarding how to fix it, and more importantly who is going to pay for the repairs.

The length of time it took to get the work started on repairing the slip on Forest Hill Rd, should be reason enough to start expediting the problem yourself as in my experience if you are waiting for the so-called experts involved from council/insurance etc you may find yourself waiting for a very long time.

I hope this may be helpful and if you need some further advice please contact Ross Sudds at Proline Plumbing & Gas Ltd, 5 Brabant Road, Waiatarua, or call 0800 10 20 11, email office@prolineplumbing.co.nz.

See our ad on the pull-out page in this issue!

Plant of the month — Kakabeak

This year my Kākābeak was a mass of glorious red flowers; the tuis were having a feast - then along came the storm that caused so much devastation in West Auckland. The hail damaged all the flowers and where the foliage brushed against other plants the branches were stripped bare, but more flowers are coming.

Ngutukākā is named for its stunning red flowers, which hang in clusters of 15-20 blooms and are shaped liked a kaka's beak. Hence Ngutu meaning beak/lips and kākā for the native parrot. According to DoC, Maori used kākābeak / ngutukākā for gifting and trading.

Kākābeak / Ngutukākā grow in open, sunny, steep sites, often on rocky outcrops. Mine is thriving in an exposed site that catches all the easterly wind, which makes it suitable for exposed Waiatarua gardens and, according to DoC, possums are not keen on them - bonus! But watch out for snails as they are partial to the tender foliage. Kākābeak are also prone to leaf miner; I spray with neem oil twice a year which helps to control that. A plus for the soil is that kākābeak are part of the pea family and can fix nitrogen the ground, allowing it to grow in less fertile environments. The seeds are long lived, possibly able to germinate after 30 years. The mature plants have long, trailing stems that form new plants when

they come into contact with the ground so one parent plant can cover a large area.

Kākābeak's conservation status is "Nationally Critical". It is of special significance to New Zealand with

only two species, *Clianthus puniceus* and *Clianthus maximus*, both of which are threatened with extinction in the wild. Wild kākābeak are currently known to be at Moturemu Island in the Kaipara Harbour, several locations near Ruatoria on the East Cape, Lake Waikaremoana, Ruakituri near Wairoa, and in parts of Hawke's Bay. Introduced plants, such as Mexican daisy, gorse and buddleia compete for habitat, threatening its survival.

Plants can grow up to 2-3m tall, but are short lived, only surviving up to 15 - 20 years.

Cathie Wells



Quote of the Month:

10 things to remember

1. Love is the answer. Always.
2. Vulnerability it not a weakness. It's a strength.
3. Your body is sacred. Cherish it.
4. Gratitude shifts everything. Be thankful.
5. Forgiveness sets you free. It really does.
6. You cannot change others. Only your self.

7. Little acts of kindness are never little. Ever.
8. Fun is underrated. Enjoy yourself.
9. Age is just a number. It's never too late.
10. Life is precious. Live it now.

Anna Grace Taylor



NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

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Weed of the Month

Climbing Asparagus *Asparagus scandens*

Regularly called public enemy number one, climbing asparagus has earned its reputation for being a prolific scrambler/climber that smothers our natives before we have even had a chance to spot it. Waiatarua has a particularly bad climbing asparagus problem. It is spread mainly by birds, particularly blackbirds. You may spot it thanks to its white flowers and round berries (green ripening to orange) at this time of year.

Control: Work from the inner bush back toward your home, to stop it from creeping into the forest. If you don't want to use herbicide, digging out the tubers is the only option. These must be disposed of carefully, burning is a great option, or transfer station. Do not leave them in the bush. However if you have more than a couple of outbreaks, herbicide may be your simplest option: the good news is, at this time of year (spring/summer) you can get away with a light spraying of glyphosate. As these plants are near natives it is important that you do not use a penetrate. Remember to ensure there is no rain predicted, and ensure you do this early enough in the day so the night dew won't set in. If the infestation has climbed to more than 60cm, cut the plant back to around 30cm and spray as above. You will need to do a respray for any missed plants 1-2 months later. Keeping blackbirds out of your garden may also help. They're generalists so will come in with any human type food; bread, food scraps etc.

Description: Evergreen with slender leaves and thin wiry stems that wrap around branches or scramble along the ground. Roots are tuberous and at this time of year (Sep-Dec) white flowers may appear with berries (green ripening orange) appearing Oct-Feb.

Really overwhelmed? Reach out to Pest-Free Waiatarua for more help if you have a lot of this pest plant. Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Pest-Free-Waiatarua-878893365649818>

Thanks to Weedbusters for the content and image



From the Editor

Hello everyone

Well the topic this month certainly seems to be about the huge storm we had not so long ago. I have never seen such heavy rain before in all my 53 years on the earth plane—it really was something else. Fortunately we didn't experience any flood damage but I know others were sadly not so lucky.

My husband took this photo of the Upper Nihotupu dam spillway just after the storm, where the sheer volume of water gushing over the top can clearly be seen.

Spring is definitely here with warmer days and lighter evenings. The shining cuckoos have made their debut, always a welcome sound for me. Our neighbours have young lambs which we can hear bleating and the plum

trees are covered in flurries of white blossom. I've been spending as much time as I can outside getting on with gardening jobs and generally tidying up. Things are starting to look a bit better around the property, although there is plenty more to do. I may as well make the most of it while I'm stuck at home. It helps to keep me busy which is a good thing right now.

Cheers, Erin

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.

Doers Networks: local, fast internet providers info@doers.net.nz

Handyman Out West: Any work undertaken. House and property maintenance, renovation and decoration eg gutter cleaning, water blasting, deck building, tree felling, painting etc. Reliable and friendly. Ph Mike 814 9708

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

Lawn mowing, ride on work only: Ph Grant at Top Grass Ltd. 814 9493 mob 021 024 75610

Oratia Community Church: On the corner of Parker & West Coast Rds. Fellowship meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 1pm in the church hall. Ph 813 9869 for information.

Plants, crafts etc: Various plants, shrubs and bromeliads. Assorted crafts, scarves, net fruit bags \$2, occasional cards, knitting, sewing, second hand books. All proceeds to Nepalese Educ Trust for Tertiary Scholarships. Phone Margaret 814 9859.

Table Tennis: every Wednesday in the Hall, 7-9pm. No experience needed, all equipment supplied. \$2 per week Contact Tony 814 9860, email tony.bacon@sthw.co.nz

Tiler / Stone layer: 21 years experience in the trade available for indoor and outdoor projects large or small. Phone Craig Starr 021 610 408.

Waiatarua Playcentre: Come and have 3 free visits at our bush-nestled Playcentre. We are child led, parent run and full of fun! Open 9:30am - 12:30pm Mon and Weds. Contact Ronni O'Brien 09 814 8835 or waiatarua@playcentre.org.nz or www.facebook.com/waiataruaplaycentre

We are Loud: modern music lessons —vocals, piano, guitar, bass, drums & songwriting. Group & private lessons for all ages and levels. Visit www.weareloud.co.nz or contact jo@weareloud.co.nz 0274 707 042.

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.

Yovi's Topstitch: Alterations or sewing projects I can do at your budget, from cushions, squabs etc. Contact Yovi 021 084 36450 or yovistopstitch12@gmail.com



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Spotlight on talented Waiatarua local

Readers who are on the Waiatarua Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Waiatarua/>) will be familiar with the stunning nature photographs shared by Greg Lokes. Recently I asked Greg if he would mind telling us a little bit about himself and how he became interested in photography, and he very kindly accepted. Here's his story.

"I moved into Waiatarua, from Mt. Albert, in January this year along with my wife and daughter. I also have two sons. We shifted into a gorgeous house designed and built by Les Fletcher (deceased). It had been his family home since the early seventies.

Recently I became a grandparent for the first time, courtesy of my youngest son and his partner.

Photography first became a thing for me when an older brother began working in a camera shop. He used to bring different 35mm film cameras home and sometimes he'd let me have a go with them. I bought my own camera, an Olympus OM10, soon after. I really only dabbled a bit in photography in the early days. A few years later I met my future wife, got married, bought a house and had children. Photography took a back seat.

Once we became empty nesters, I had more time for my hobbies. It was now the digital age and I had a lot to catch up on. There were probably three areas that really helped improve my photography. Firstly, with the car club I belong to, I became their unofficial 'official' photographer and secondly I began contributing lots of neighbourhood photos to my local Facebook community page. My photos seem to be well received in both these communities, which gave me a lot of confidence. Thirdly in 2019 my wife and I sold our business, rented out our house and flew to Europe/UK for a nine month campervan holiday. It was a different world back then. I was taking lots of photos every day, sometimes hundreds, and of many different subjects. In doing this I learnt a lot about photography.

Whilst in Europe we decided that we might as well include Africa in our holiday plans. We booked wildlife safaris in Botswana, Namibia and Tanzania. This was absolute bliss for me and another step in my photography journey.

I've never had any formal training in photography although I have watched a few YouTube videos. Generally I've just picked it up as I've gone along. I'm not into spending hours on a computer delving into the dark arts of Photoshop etc, preferring to capture what I want in-camera and then do a little bit of tweaking on my MacBook. I now have a Facebook page...<https://www.facebook.com/Gregs-Eye-2180581698675099>. Please do check it out when you have a moment".

Below and on the following page are a selection of some of Greg's beautiful photos, including a few he took at the Upper Nihotupu Dam in the storm's aftermath.



Above: Greg atop a rocky peak somewhere in Snowdonia National Park in Wales while on his European holiday.



Erin Kingsleigh-Smith

