

## MINUTES

THE ROSS LOCAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE READING ROOM, ROSS, ON TUESDAY  
5<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022, COMMENCING AT 11.15AM.

### 1 PRESENT

Christine Robinson, Jill Bennett, Sally Langridge, Helen Davies, Michael Smith, Herbert Johnson, Arthur Thorpe (Chair), Marcus Rodrigues, Ann Thorpe (Hon Secretary).

### 2 IN ATTENDANCE

Cedric Tuffin, Lorraine Wyatt (NMC), Tamara Baker.

### 3 APOLOGIES

Councillor Andrew Calvert, Candy Hurren.

### 4 DECLARATION OF ANY PECUNIARY INTEREST BY A MEMBER OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

In accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Part 5, S48A – S56, a member of a Special Committee must not participate in any discussion or vote on any matter in respect to which the member:

- a) has an interest; or
- b) is aware or ought to be aware that a close associate has an interest.

A member has an interest in a matter if the matter was decided in a particular manner, receive or have an expectation of receiving or likely to receive a pecuniary benefit or pecuniary detriment.

*\*It should be noted that any person declaring an interest is required to notify the General Manager, in writing, of the details of any interest declared within 7 days of the declaration.\**

*Nil Declared*

### 5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

*That the minutes of the meeting of the Ross Local District Committee held on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2021** be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.*

*Christine Robinson / Jill Bennett*

## **6 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

### **6.1 Ross Pool**

Chair distributed the “Swimming Pool Operations” report tabled at Councils February meeting. The RLDC wishes to place on record its appreciation of the efforts of the many volunteers and NMC staff for the wonderful job they did during the swimming season. It was an outstanding effort by all in the Ross community and the NMC in keeping the pool running so well, that it exceeded other council pools in terms of no days lost through lack of lifeguards. In addition, the number of attendees visiting the pool per day (1994 visitors/53 open days = 38 per day), was the highest of the three Council pools.

Our new committee member, Sally Langridge, played an important part as she was a volunteer lifeguard, helping to keep the pool open for so many days.

A very successful Pool season concluded on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March.

### **6.2 Village Green**

The Ross Village Green (RVG) is now open to the public. There has been a couple of issues raised but all in all, the new area has been very well received.

Lighting in the park is very bright late at night, however Council’s Works Manager has been asked to investigate the possibility of installing a timer to switch off the lights at an appropriate time in the evening.

Council has installed “No Dogs Except Guide Dogs” signs at the entrance to the RVG, until Council decides if on lead dogs will be permanently banned, or allowed into the RVG. The signs were stolen soon after being erected, however they have been replaced and are still displayed. Discussion ensued regarding no dogs and it is a very emotive issue. Will tourists/locals use the RVG if they are unable to take dogs in?

The children’s playground is one factor in banning dogs, but also, during the community consultation process, having no dogs allowed was quite high on people’s preferences.

Lorraine Wyatt advised that although the RVG had already been unofficially opened, there will be an official opening in the next few weeks. NMC will be co-ordinating with the local member and other dignitaries for a suitable opening date as soon as possible.

### **6.3 Clearing The Macquarie River**

The issues of concern are infestations of Cumbungi weeds and debris from previous floods needing removal. Chair has contacted DPAC, who suggested referring the matter to DPIPW. The Chair then contacted DPIPW, and following an interval of three months, received a reply from Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service who advised that requests for weed management are considered on a case by case basis.

Chair then contacted NMC, requesting advice as to who would be the appropriate Council Officer to forward all correspondence to in relation to Council formulating a funding request to TPWS for weed management, should Council decide that such an application is appropriate.

Lorraine Wyatt will progress this request and advised that the same matter had been raised at the Campbell Town Forum. Same issue from two communities so close together make for a more powerful request.

Marcus Rodrigues advised Cumbungi is in a pond at his property 18 Church Street, and was advised that it could repopulate the Macquarie River if not treated at the same time.

Chair pointed out that there are two types of Cumbungi weed, native Tasmanian and Northern Hemisphere. NRET (previously DPIPWE) recommend that native Tasmanian Cumbungi weed be generally not removed, as it provides habitat for fauna.

#### **6.4 Condition Of Trees in Ross**

Council's Works Manager, Mr Leigh McCullagh, has advised that the Victorian tree inspection company ENSPEC have inspected the Elms in Church Street and have reported that only one needed attention. The Elm in the vicinity of the Top Bakery needed its straps replaced.

ENSPEC will be returning to Ross in April to inspect the trees in other streets.

Ongoing matter.

#### **6.5 Badajos Street Rail Crossing**

The existing road approaches to this railway crossing are already width complaint at 5.1 metres wide (5.0 metres is the minimum width required) and the railway crossing itself has been widened to 5.5 metres by TasRail.

After discussion as to the costs associated with any widening of the Badajos Street approaches, and the effect that funding the widening of this crossing would have on future Ross Capital Works Budgets, it was suggested by the Chair that a "Give Way To Oncoming Vehicles" sign on one side of the crossing, would lessen the risk of an accident caused by two vehicles trying to cross the railway line simultaneously. The Committee, with one exception, were in agreement with the Chair's suggestion.

The "Give Way To Oncoming Vehicles" sign has now been installed on the eastern road approaches to the crossing.

No further action required.

#### **6.6 Shipping Container In Ross Caravan Park**

The shipping container has been removed.

Committee was of the understanding that a caravan apparently purchased as a replacement for the demountable was being refurbished in Launceston, before being moved to the site. It

was expected to take approximately 6-8 weeks, however, as this issue was first raised in June 2021 completion is taking a lot longer than expected.

Considering that it is now April 2022, Chair contacted Council's Planning Department in March, requesting again that the demountable be removed. It is noted that the current lease arrangements in regards to the Caravan Park expire in April 2022.

Committee generally discussed lease and lessee. Chair raised the point that at the April 2018 meeting of the RLDC, then Mayor David Downie and Council's General Manager, assured the committee that any new buildings or changes would have to be compliant with NMC development and planning regulations.

In the case of the shipping container and the demountable building, it would appear that this has not occurred.

### **6.7 \$2,500 Allowance In Lieu Of Secretarial Support**

Council's General Manager confirmed that the \$2,500 allowance in lieu of RLDC secretarial support for the previous 12 months would be available to be spent on Council approved projects proposed by the RLDC. Committee has discussed various projects, and currently the general consensus is for a bench seat on the grass behind the Cenotaph facing north.

Council's Works Manager has advised that an order has been placed for a chair (with back) and that the current lead time is approximately 8 weeks. Jill Bennett asked if the total cost was for the whole project or would there be any money remaining. Chair advised the bench was a cost of \$2,000 and the remainder will go towards the installation and concrete. Bench cost is due to its very solid construction and it will match the existing outdoor settings.

Chair asked members to think about what projects could be considered for utilisation of next financial year's funds.

### **6.8 Weather Damage to Ross Reading Room**

The cornerstones and the bottom course of sandstone bricks at the entrance of the reading room are weathering away and in need of attention. A report has been received from Council's Heritage Consultant.

NMC has carried out cleaning and rectification of the southern gutters of the building, which should now route rainwater directly to the stormwater drains. It is still to be determined if a drain does in fact run along the eastern base of the building.

Matter ongoing. Chair to follow up with Works Manager.

### **6.9 Water Leak Outside Ross Hotel**

Chair contacted TasWater who stated that the leak is occurring in a Council sprinkler line on the hotel side of Bridge Street. Council's Works Manager and Chair reinspected in February, as the problem appears to be ongoing.

Chair to follow up with Council's Works Manager regarding repair (hard to source parts?) or total replacement.

#### **6.10 Ownership of Original Ross Burial Ground and Public Notice Board**

Council has confirmed that it does own the Original Ross Burial Ground, but that the Public Notice Board behind the red telephone boxes does not appear on its asset register. It is not known who owns the noticeboard.

Following committee discussion, Chair will write to Maree Bricknell, requesting the name of Council's Heritage Advisor to check for appropriate heritage colours. If council would supply materials, a working bee could be organised to tidy it up.

The Ross Post Office has a key to the cabinet. Planning Applications, were in the past placed in it for public exhibition. Marcus Rodrigues volunteered to contact the current land owner to check if it belongs to what was the "old garage". Chair to wait until word back from Marcus, then follow up as appropriate.

#### **6.11 Weed Spraying/Chains On Bollards Approaching The Ross Bridge**

The bollards on the approaches to the Ross Bridge have some chains missing. Tops of the bollards have been fixed, but the chains linking them have not been put back. Council's Works Manager has confirmed these chains are considered a public safety issue due to children swinging on the chains and endangering themselves. In addition, swinging on the chains weakens and damages the bollards themselves.

Council advised they will not be replacing the chains, as this involves tightening the chain fixings into already weakened and previously repaired bollards, which can further split the tops of the bollards once again. Any further chains that partially or totally fall out of the bollards will be removed and taken to Council's Works Depot. This is not ideal, but considering the implications, there appears no other option.

Council's Works Manager has requested the weed spraying contractor not to excessively spray for weeds around the bollard bases. It was suggested that a request be made to Council for soil to be put back around the bases, and volunteers offered to assist and seed. Chair to ask Works Manager.

### **7 NEW BUSINESS**

#### **7.1 Councils Capital Budget Request List For Financial Year 2022/2023**

RLDC members have been requested to consider their requests/ranking for capital budget expenditure items for financial year 2022/2023. After discussion, some items were removed from the previous year's list and some new items added.

Chair to distribute list via email and asked for preferences to be received back by COB Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022, as there is a very short lead time to get them back to NMC. As always, participant's preferences will remain confidential, and only the anonymous aggregated results will be disseminated.

## 7.2 Round Table

- *Christine Robinson* – NMC fixed the bollard on the corner near the pub – thank you, however it was knocked over again the next day. It has been photographed and forwarded to NMC.
- *Marcus Rodrigues* – rabbits are absolutely out of control in the town and in plague proportions. There are quite a number of dead rabbits around the town and a committee member advised that Myxomatosis is already here apparently? Herbert Johnson attended a meeting two weeks ago and has advised it had been released. Chair to follow up for further information.
- *Herbert Johnson*
  - The Nivelles Street signage damaged in the hooning incidents has still not been replaced. Chair to contact Works Manager.
  - Large pile of dirt in Church Street with red tape around it has been there for a long time, why? and can it be remediated. Chair to follow up.
  - Road edges from Ross to Tacky Bridge and around the town in general need grading/repairing. Also, road to new quarry and around the dirt section of the recreation ground needs regrading. Chair to follow up.
  - New signage in the cemeteries; asked who put them up as some need to be renamed properly. Signage would appear to be non-denominational, but not naming the Methodist and Presbyterian sections doesn't really tell anyone anything. Who is responsible for church signage, NMC or churches?
- *Helen Davies*
  - A resident advised that in previous years, a NMC staff member would blow all the leaves onto the street for the street sweeping machine to pick everything up. This appears to be no longer happening and the leaves stay on the footpath causing safety issues if they are wet. Chair to follow up.
  - The sandstone edging beside the bridge steps and below the metal handrail is missing blocks, so it is no longer holding back soil and gravel from the adjacent bank. The gravel and debris washes down onto the bridge steps - becoming a pedestrian hazard and an eyesore for visitors - and it finally washes into the river. This edging of sandstone has been an alternative means of scaling the bank when the river is in flood, which has led to its deterioration. Replacing the missing stone blocks would prevent this ongoing erosion. Chair to raise matter with Council's Works Manager, and possibly show Councillors this problem on their annual bus tour?
- *Michael Smith* – sandstone wall at the top of Church Street has top stones missing and looks very disordered. Helen to supply photos for Chair to contact NMC.
- *Jill Bennett*
  - Asked for the committee to forward a letter to Michael of the Ross Newsagency, thanking him for watering of the footpaths in the main street. Chair to prepare a draft to send to NMC for their approval and preparation on council letterhead.
  - A number of Silver Birch trees next to the Town Hall have died. Can they be replaced and who actually looks after them?
- *Cedric Tuffin* – Questions were asked of Cedric (as the previous school bus driver) regarding a more appropriate/safer bus stop for both school buses and Redline. It has been discussed that a new pickup point could be near the Post Office, as noise from the bus had been raised as an issue near the Newsagency. The issues of caravans and cars parking in the bus zone near the public toilets is also ongoing. Discussion ensued as to where it would be safer to put a bus stop. No one seems sure who would be the

responsible entity.

- 7.3 Tamara Baker, Manager of the Tasmanian Wool Centre visited the meeting to meet the RLDC members and to introduce herself. Tamara spoke about the relationship with DPIPWE and use of volunteers in opening/closing the historic Female Factory daily. Following a recent productive site visit by DPIPWE, it was acknowledged that without the participation of the Wool Centre and volunteers, DPIPWE could not have this lovely historic building used as it currently is.

Tamara thanked the volunteers for their unstinting participation and mentioned that they are always happy to have more people join their group. As always, more hands mean less stress on those that are already involved.

## 8 **NEXT MEETING/CLOSURE**

The Chair closed the meeting at 12.45 pm.

**Next meeting – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 commencing 11.15am in the Ross Reading Room.**