

MINUTES

THE ROSS LOCAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE READING ROOM, ROSS, ON TUESDAY 5th JULY 2022, COMMENCING AT 11.15AM.

1 PRESENT

Christine Robinson, Jill Bennett, Candy Hurren, Helen Davies, Sally Langridge, Marcus Rodrigues, Michael Smith, Herbert Johnson (from 11.50), Arthur Thorpe (Chairperson), Ann Thorpe (Hon Secretary).

2 IN ATTENDANCE

Mayor Mary Knowles OAM, Julie Smith, Mr Phil Brown.

3 APOLOGIES

Nil

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 3rd May, 2022 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

Michael Smith / Jill Bennett

6 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 Clearing The Macquarie River

The issues of concern are infestations of Cumbungi weeds and debris from previous floods needing removal.

Correspondence with various Government Departments regarding weed management and debris removal have been forwarded to Council, who advise that they are in discussions with NRET (previously DPIPWE) and will advise when spraying is scheduled. A low river level is necessary for debris clearance.

Matter ongoing.

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

The April inspection did not occur, now scheduled to be conducted in August. If ENSPEC are again unavailable, then a local contractor may be engaged to conduct the inspection.

Matter ongoing.

6.3 Removal Of Demountable In Ross Caravan Park

This issue was first raised in June 2021, Chair contacted Council's Planning Department again in March 2022, requesting that the demountable be removed.

Demountable has now been removed and a large caravan is being used as an office.

No further action required.

6.4 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.

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.

Mr McCullagh has asked street cleaning staff to remove the loose material on the footpath in front of the reading room to enable a closer look at the problem.

Inspection revealed no drain has been found. The fine fill currently in the trench will be removed and coarser aggregate will be inserted to aid drainage. The sandstone is actually in quite good condition and remediation work to the damaged sandstone will be carried out by a stonemason once the weather warms up.

Matter ongoing.

6.5 Water Leak Outside Ross Hotel

The leak at this location has now been repaired.

No further action required.

6.6 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.

Despite numerous enquiries, the ownership of this notice board has been unable to be determined. Best guess is that it was erected in the old Ross Council days. It should probably now come under NMC's wing, as it is standing on Council's nature strip. The RLDC is prepared to provide the labour to refurbish the notice board, Council's Works Manager has confirmed that Council will supply the paint subject to the colour being approved by Council's Heritage Consultant.

Chair has been in contact with Paul Godier who is endeavouring to obtain a colour chart of the approved colours, so that the RLDC can make a selection and have the colour approved by Council.

Matter ongoing.

6.7 Councils Capital Budget Request List For Financial Year 2022/2023

The RLDC's prioritised budget request list was presented to Councils May meeting and the RLDC is awaiting advice from Council as to which requests will be funded.

Mayor Knowles advised that at the June 2022 council meeting, councillors voted to increase rates by 3.75%, not 4.5% as recommended, therefore some items on wish lists may not be able to be fulfilled, as the available dollars will be impacted by this lower increase.

Matter ongoing.

6.8 Missing (Stolen) Street Sign Nivelles Street

Customer request 61740 has been lodged with Council requesting the missing (stolen) sign be reinstalled.

Not yet replaced as at 5th July 2022.

Matter ongoing.

6.9 Excavation Outside 7 Church Street

Issue raised with Council who are looking into the matter. Part of NMC drainage system and Mr McCullagh will follow up with staff.

The excavation has now been filled.

No further action.

6.10 Regrading Of Road Edges

Customer Request 61742 has been lodged, Council's Works Manager advises that; "the grading program will start shortly and we can start around Ross, the shoulder grading is about to kick off as well, we would like to see a bit more rain so the roads and shoulders settle back down straight away." In hand, so hopefully to happen soon.

Grading commenced on 4th July.

Matter ongoing.

6.11 Damaged Wall Ross Bridge South East Steps

The sandstone block retaining wall at this location is damaged and backfill is washing out onto the steps and down into the river. Customer request 61696 has been raised requesting rectification. NMC to remediate by repairing wall and tidy up.

The wall has been remediated by NMC, and soil remediation and seeding to be conducted when weather warms up.

6.12 Damaged Wall South End Of Church Street

Wall at the top (south end) of Church Street has top stones missing and looks very disordered. Customer request 61699 has been raised requesting rectification. Council's Works Manager has advised that repairs to this wall will be a major undertaking; it almost needs rebuilding.

Part of the issue is sourcing the appropriate sandstone as a large amount required. Perhaps a member of the committee may be able to assist with the provision of the stone as has been donated in the past.

Matter ongoing.

6.13 Not For Profit Organisations In Ross.

At the May RLDC meeting, Mr Brown from the Ross Newsagency and Takeaway, asked if the Ross Community Sports Club and the RLDC are permitted by Council to trade in opposition to the local business community. Chair undertook to raise with, and seek clarification from Council.

Council has now written directly to Mr Brown in relation to this matter, however Mr Brown at the July RLDC meeting again sought clarification regarding the "ring fencing" of volunteer food

stalls, in order to prevent them from competing for business in close proximity to the existing commercial food premises.

Chair advised Mr Brown to contact Council directly if further clarification is required in relation to the contents of the letter received from Council.

Mr Brown also sought clarification in relation to overnight parking of recreational vehicles being permitted at the Ross Recreation Ground. Mr Brown pointed out that when Council gave approval at its June 2022 meeting for overnight parking (Minute No.22/195) at the Ross Recreation Ground, one of the conditions was that:-

“The recreational vehicles must be of a size that cannot be accommodated by the Ross Caravan Park”

Mr Brown asked if the condition meant that only large caravans would be allowed to park overnight?

Chair referred to paragraph 2 second sentence which stated:-

“The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the Ross Recreation Ground to be used as a venue for recreational vehicles that are part of a large club or group to stay overnight”

Chair stated that in his opinion, only allowing large vehicles to stay overnight and requiring smaller vehicles of a large club or group to park at the Ross Caravan Park would not be acceptable to a large club or group, and would result in such organisations taking their business elsewhere. Another member of the RLDC also commented that the Caravans Group have stated that if that particular condition was imposed, then they would no longer stay at Ross. If such a decision was reached, this would result in a loss of income to the Sports Club who disseminate their income to the community, and would also result in a loss of revenue to the various businesses in Ross that club members patronise.

A member of the Ross Community Sports Club present at the meeting, also pointed out that the two night maximum stay is unrealistic, given that most of the groups arrive on a Friday afternoon, stay Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, and depart on the Monday. A three night maximum stay would be more appropriate.

Mayor Knowles undertook to take the matters back to Council for clarification. Chair undertook to also raise the matter with Council.

7 NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Ross Community Sports Ground Master Plan

Council voted at its May meeting:-

“That Council in-principle adopt the Ross Community Sports Ground and Clubrooms Draft Master Plans, release the plans for stakeholder and public comment, and receive the finalised master plans with costings at a future Council meeting.”

The cost of upgrading the clubrooms toilets and change facilities (players, umpires and public) has been estimated at \$940,030 – the remainder of the recommended upgrade has not been costed.

It is noted that the draft plans include a fenced, off lead, dog exercise area (uncosted).

General discussion regarding the Master Plan ensued, and it was noted that the plans will be released for stakeholder and public comment,

It was also noted that Cattleman's Association came last weekend and used the rodeo area, and want to come again on a number of occasions.

It was suggested that Council could liaise with Rodeo and Sports Committee as to current use and further use of the rodeo area, particularly if it is envisaged that the rodeo area could also be used as a fenced, off lead, dog exercise area.

Chair expressed concern at the safety of the small grandstand adjacent to the rodeo area and in very close proximity to the children's playground. There are missing floor planks and exposed nails in the grandstand, and its structural integrity is also unknown. Chair will take photographs and raise the matter with Council, and also ask Council to determine ownership of the grandstand.

It was stated that Cricket matches at the Ross Recreation Ground are expected to increase in the future as Covid decreases (hopefully). It was requested by Mayor Knowles that the Ross Community Sports Club forward information on the cricket to Lorraine Wyatt for dissemination.

7.2 Round Table Discussion

Herbert Johnson - Beaufront Road (C305) road speed signage confusing. 100km sign and another sign says 35km. Signage should be positioned past the town boundary. Chair to check and follow up.

Corner of Portugal and Waterloo Streets. Pond of water, can something be done? Not owned by Council, this is Crown Land. Chair mentioned that the NMC Municipality Stormwater Drainage Report had been completed and hoped that it would be released to the public shortly.

Raised the subject of a walking path along the entirety of the eastern bank of the Macquarie River. Chair reminded committee members that the matter of a walking path has been raised a number of times but is not possible to complete, because several properties sited along the eastern bank of the river have land titles that extend to the edge of the river itself, and consequently the land is private land which is not in Council ownership.

Some street lights appear to be faulty in Church Street. Chair undertook to investigate and lodge an online repair request where applicable.

Mayor Mary Knowles – asked that members of the Ross Community consider standing as candidates for the upcoming October Council elections. There is a need for local

representation and it would be great for the southern community. Compulsory voting will be in place for the October election.

Waste management recycling, (FOGO) will commence in the new year. Mayor raised and discussed the issue of educating the community in the correct use of recycling and other bins, as any contaminated bins are not sorted, but are dumped straight into general waste. This dumping adds to the waste charges incurred by NMC, and correct community use would keep charges down for both council and residents. There is a need to educate the community in the correct use. Council looking at ways of delivering this information.

Marcus Rodrigues – spoke about putting the wrong thing in the wrong bin, and as a consequence of a rubbish audit had his bin taped up!!!

Raised the subject of community garden beds in the eastern corners of the village green to be established and tended by local residents. Chair asked that information regarding the proposal be sent to him and he would raise the matter with the NMC. It was pointed out that Public Liability Insurance would probably be required.

Michael Smith – Requested an update on the “official opening” of the Village Green. Mayor advised that the change of government had delayed this, however local area MPs had been contacted regarding this, and it hopefully will be held in the warmer weather. Discussed also, the prominent sign in the garden near the Ross Hotel. This sign has to stay for some time as a condition of the grants received.

Key to the Community Library – can the Ross Community Sports Club have their own key to the Library Room as they apparently lease the room? The Club also requested a key for the public notice board, as they place information about events on the board and the key at the Post Office is only available during office hours Monday to Friday. Chair to follow up for Sports Club.

Candy Hurren – kerbing in the centre car parking area opposite the Town Hall has been damaged by a truck, needs to be repaired. Chair to action.

Jill Bennett – Recently a council contractor sprayed edges of country roads. Just a couple of weeks later NMC have dropped gravel and graded edges of road. The gravel is certain to contain weeds and the previous spraying will be a waste of time and money. Unfortunately it would appear to be a matter of ill-timing.

Discussion held as to the possibility of a garbage collection on country roads, as a new law has come into effect that it is now illegal for rural properties to have their own tips. Mayor advised contacting NMC to request this be considered.

8 NEXT MEETING/CLOSURE

The Chair closed the meeting at 12.30 pm.

Next meeting – Tuesday 2nd August 2022 commencing 11.15am in the Ross Reading Room.