

MERRA Newsletter June 2017

MERRA AGM: It was great to see another strong community turn-out on 30 April. New Rodney Councillor Greg Sayers' talk was candid, interesting and offered fascinating insights into his priorities and the workings of Auckland Council.

Your 2017 MERRA committee (with some of their particular interests/responsibilities in brackets) is: **Stuart Windross** (Chair, infrastructure/services, sign project), **Heather McKay** (Secretary, plant pest control, health and safety), Susan Jelichich (Treasurer), **Mark Croft** (animal pest control, defibrillator), **Chris Russell** (pest control), **Susan Beer** (neighbourhood support, little library, plant pest control), **Mark Topping** (roading and walkways, harbour health), **David Legg** (community clean-up events), **Peter Seers** (community response group), and **Colin Harvey** (unable to attend the May meeting). The committee has re-coopted Bruce Scoggins (co-chair of the Warkworth Area Liaison Group) and also coopted George Ireland (who has agreed to assist with legal matters). Additionally John Waugh continues to do a fine job running our website (www.scottslanding.org) and Bill Townson is our 'irreplaceable' fire team leader.

MERRA Subscription 2017: Thanks to those who have already paid these in response to Susan Jelichich's recent invitation. Payment (\$12.00 per household) can be made to acct#: **02-0480-0033353-00**. Please include your name/address. Further to the AGM discussion, we have been humbled that many residents have chosen to endorse MERRA's work by including a donation with their subscription. As Susan outlined anything beyond \$12 is treated thus.

Neighbourhood Support (from Susan Beer)

There was a security incident the beginning of the month with a garage broken into and Mule (Light Utility Vehicle) taken along with tools. A good reminder to us all not to get too complacent thinking that it won't happen to you. Keep a look out for your neighbours especially when they are away for any length of time. Lock up cars at night and note any suspicious activity by getting licence plate numbers which could help fill in a bigger picture.

The newly formed Boatwatch Group has been active exchanging information with the Maritime Police Unit which operates from 'Deodar'. Our neighbours across the river at Jamieson and Opahi Bays are also included in this group and keeping an eye on the moored boats.

Meeting with Local Board Members: The MERRA committee met with Local Board members (Beth Houlbrooke, Tessa Berger) and Councillor Greg Sayers last month. Unfortunately Alison Roe was a late apology. We had a wide ranging discussion about areas of interest for our residents and feel MERRA has established a good working relationship with our elected representatives.

New Residents: There are eleven new residents to Scotts Landing in the last year who will be welcomed by the MERRA committee and Street Coordinators at the annual morning tea next month.

Little Library: This is now installed in its beautiful cabinet alongside the noticeboard at the Charles St cross-roads and is operating very successfully. Our thanks go to Susan Beer for providing the inspiration and guiding the project to reality.

Animal Pest Control (from Mark Croft)

Winter is the time when animal pests are looking for food and warmth. Both are in abundance inside our homes and so now is the time to be setting traps and laying poison or installing modern electronic deterrents for rodents.

In the wider region, MERRA have commenced refreshing the bait stations in the district. We speak for all residents in expressing our ongoing gratitude for the dedication and hard work put in by all of the bait run holders.

Broadband: MERRA continues its attempts to get residents north of 107 Ridge Road connections speeds on a par with those delivered through our 2015 'fibre to cabinet' success. Unfortunately our very extensive work to be included with Snells and Algies in the Government's UFB2 initiative was ultimately unsuccessful. Similarly work with Chorus and providers to get direct connections for residents actually on the fibre route have proved fruitless (even with residents looking at paying over \$2000 for the privilege). We are advised providers "have no process" for such connections despite earlier indications. A more recent formal request to Chorus to remedy the matter remains un-responded-to but subject to on-going follow-up. We will take up Greg Sayers' recent offer of a joint meeting with Jim Quinn, Head of Strategy at Auckland Council, to see if that may offer some opportunity for progress.

Power: Our power supply continues to be much more robust following the MERRA-initiated upgrades and vegetation clearance in 2015. Pleasingly Vector carried out further upgrades last month. Please be vigilant in keeping trees on your property clear of lines as a fault caused by these can take out your neighbours' power too.

'Scotts Landing' roadside sign: After a protracted and frustrating 6 months' process, Auckland Transport (AT) has finally given their approval to the sign's location and design (these were circulated to a good reception at the AGM). Thanks are due to the volunteer working group who responded to MERRA's invitation and have put much goodwill, talent, time and effort into this project. The group is Alan Seelye, Jude Nye, John Waugh, Heather Sidders, Penny and Malcolm Scott, Mark Croft, and Joy Paxton (convened by Stuart Windross). We have also had some very generous offers of materials from residents along with supportive responses to our call for feedback. We will acknowledge these contributions formally. We hope to have sticking points in the written agreement between MERRA and Auckland Transport ironed out shortly and look forward to finally being able to get to the construction phase of the project.

Storm water and land stability: Saturated ground, very heavy rain and a number of slips have raised further concern about run-off from roads impacting land stability, harbour sedimentation, and the safety of road-users. The road-edge slip seaward just up from Bayley's cottage is a graphic example but the one above 484 Ridge Road is also potentially hazardous. Safety markers have been improved further to MERRA/CRG requests. In collaboration with Local Board Chair Beth Houlbrooke, we await advice re a site meeting with Auckland Transport and finding out what remedial actions are planned.

MERRA has also initiated a project led by Mark Topping that will map and document sites where slips/instability are a concern, areas where concentrated road run-off may be part of the problem, and impacts on the harbour. Once we have this information collated we will liaise with Council and Auckland Transport to seek some improvements and assurances for the future.

Rubbish Clean-up: David Legg advises that the Auckland Council will provide an inorganic collection in our area between the 18th and 22nd September. This service must be pre-booked at <https://inorganiccollections.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Inorganic/>. The annual cleanup is planned for 29 October with a 9.00am start at the Charles St crossroads.

Defibrillator: Mark Croft is storing a defibrillator provided by Auckland Council that MERRA will install alongside the little library and noticeboard at the Charles St crossroads. There are delays while we await follow-up information from Council re the lockable cabinet, emergency service 111 registration, and service/maintenance arrangements.

Community Response Group [CRG] (formerly Civil Defence): Chaired by Peter Seers this group continues to meet regularly and build resilience for our community. You may have read in 'Mahurangi Matters' recently of moves by Council's Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM) team to distance themselves from local CRGs for what appeared to be health and safety liability reasons. In light of this Peter Seers, Bruce Scoggins and Stuart Windross met with CDEM Director John Dragicevich to clarify CDEM's position and challenge further reduction in CRG support. After a constructive meeting, Peter is working with other local CRG chairs to set up a pilot programme whereby CDEM could work with CRGs via an umbrella group. This group representing up to a dozen local CRGs could act as a conduit for resumed funding (eg. for generator fuel, radio batteries), training, support and coordination. This is a positive development in which Peter is taking the lead role. We trust it will result in better equipped CRGs and improved assistance for local residents in the event of an emergency. ***You can help... please see the request below.***

Movie Club - Expressions of Interest: A group of MERRA residents have indicated that a Movie Club would be a great idea to help beat the winter blues. We are thinking Rialto type or foreign films. It will depend on what we can get our hands on but we would be open to suggestions. If this is something that appeals to you please register your interest with Susan Jelichich – Merra Treasurer at Merra.treasurer@gmail.com

Event Dates to note (subject to confirmation):

- Welcome for New Residents (New residents, MERRA Committee and Neighbourhood Support Coordinators) - 23 July.
- Neighbourhood Clean-up Day - 29 October 9am meet at Charles St crossroads.
- New Year's Day Community Cricket Match – Monday 1 January 2018
- Community BBQ - Sunday 4 March 2018 Scott Homestead

Community Response Group Request: please help build our community resilience. Three years ago we compiled a list of skills and resources held by local residents. The information could potentially save lives or property in an emergency event. We are updating this list. You are invited to print out the form below, fill it in, and ***drop it into your Neighbourhood Support Street Coordinator's mail box.*** Please note that any information you provide will remain confidential to our local CRG, will be held securely and will not be used for any other purpose.

Stuart Windross (Chair) and the MERRA Committee

June 2017

Community Response Group (CRG): Skills and Resources in Scotts Landing

In an emergency event (eg: tsunami, serious storm, earthquake) our CRG and community will need to work together to help each other. To be prepared for such an event we'd like to update information on local skills and resources that could be called upon if required.

Please indicate the resources and/or skills that you might be able to offer in the event of an emergency.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CONTACT DETAILS _____

SKILLS (please **circle** those that you might offer and **add any others**)

First aid skills , eg: current first aid certificate
Organisational skills (eg helping set up emergency accommodation)
Catering Skills
Medical professional – nurse, doctor, paramedic etc
Experienced Boat skipper / crew
Experienced Radio operator (eg: CB / Marine)
Earth moving / heavy machinery operator
Building/Construction Skills
Experienced chainsaw operator
Others, please add:

RESOURCES (please **circle** those that you might be able to provide on request and **add any others**)

Boat, 4x4 vehicle, trailer, quad bike, tractor
Digger or earthmoving gear
Chainsaw, generator, ropes, jacks, water pump
Welder
Emergency lighting (mains supply)
Emergency lighting (non mains supply)
Fuel supply, fuel containers, substantial ropes, chainblock, vehicle mounted winch
CB/Marine radios (independent of mobile/telco & power networks)
Tents, camping gear, stretchers/airbeds, gas bottles
Spare emergency accommodation (eg caravan, bunkroom)
Others, please add:

Fire Water supply: Is your water supply easily located in the event of a fire in your absence? If not please describe the location of your water tanks and how to access them.

We suggest this might also be a good time to check you have an adequate survival kit.