



MERRA Newsletter – September, 2016

Spring is in the air ... !

Broadband

We don't have a lot of progress to report on remaining broadband issues except to say that we are still pursuing Chorus on two matters:

Getting improved speeds for residents north of the green box on Ridge Rd near the Charles St intersection; and also

The possibility of those same residents connecting to the fibre cable that now runs past their gate.

We are also looking at options under the Government's RBI2 funding round yet to be announced.

Just as this newsletter is going to press, we received information about fibre connections for residents north of the green box at the Charles St intersection. We shortly will be in touch with those that registered interest in a connection, with details of that news.

Plant Pests

There will be a mail drop of **Worst Weeds in the Rodney Local Board Area** and **Plant Me Instead!** documents produced by the Rodney Local Board and the Auckland Council / Department of Conservation which may be a helpful resource for identification of, method of eradication and/or control of plant pests.

Chris Russell kindly stores the following pesticides. Glyphosate spray for general weed control, annuals, perennials, and a number of woody plants and brush weeds; Triumph

Herbicide Gel for swabbing on stumps of problematic weeds, shrubs and trees (also prevents re-growth/sprouting etc).

For information as to how to treat different weeds, or to collect sprays call Chris (425 5672). Changes to Health and Safety requirements may mean that you are required to acknowledge that you are capable of safely handling and using before you can collect.

If you're prepared to lend a hand in specific target areas (or better still are prepared to be responsible for a specific area) please let Chris (425 5672) or Heather (425 6684) know of your willingness to assist. We'd really appreciate some volunteers to help execute plans developed by Parks and Reserves personnel, or to focus on small specific local targets.

Where can pest plant rubbish go? Generally, just tossing it somewhere else is not ideal. The Local Board has applied for extra funding to continue initiatives such as the war on weeds. We would like to think that there will be something to help get rid of pest plant waste once funding is decided in October. Once we have information, we'll post an informational update / alert on our website, and on the community noticeboard at Charles Street.

Neighbourhood Support

Some of you may have had a cold call from someone purporting to be from Microsoft (or maybe someone else) asking you to perform a keyboard or settings task on your computer. This person will sound credible and may even have information about your computer. **This is however a scam** and unwary people may open the door to others taking control of your device.

Our advice is for you to ignore any requests to do anything on your device and to terminate the call.

Community Response Group

The local Community Response Group (under Auckland Civil Defence) has the intention of providing shelter and assistance to residents in any significant event. These events may include Storm, Volcano, Tsunami, Earthquake, Flood, Fire, Landslide, Biosecurity or Epidemic.

We have a Civil Defence base at Fergusson House. Our requirement is to be able to support our local community for three days in the event of the above events, after then, we expect that outside assistance will be available.

Please contact peter Seers peter@seers.me or 021 37 38 35 or 09 425 5286 if you are interested in finding out more about your local CRG (Community Response Group).

Cell Phone Coverage

Our survey of residents on the strength of their mobile signal at their house at Scotts Landing is now open.

Residents are encouraged to take the survey for each mobile service provider in the house (second and subsequent survey's in each case will need to be accessed on a separate device).

The survey can be taken by following this link:- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VJ275F7>

Taking the survey will help us assess how much of an issue cell phone coverage is in the area and if one provider is better than another for certain areas.

We will report results back to you as well as developing a plan to try and work with providers to improve signal strength.

Defibrillator

It has been a year now since MERRA started this project. Since then, Orewa has had its tenth device installed and Warkworth, Snells Beach and Algies Bay are also now covered. While Penny Webster is our main point of contact at Auckland Council, it is her staff who are moving matters forward. In a recent email, we were assured that this was now a 'high priority' for them. Let's wait and see how high.

Fire Team

The fire team had a practice at the beginning of the month down at Scott House. We can never have enough people on the team so if you want to join the fire team and learn how to use our first response equipment please contact Bill Townson (425-6121 or bimon@xtra.co.nz) if you want to volunteer – the team trains for an hour every second month so not much impact on your time.

Animal Pest Control

Our ongoing programme of animal pest control is still in play. A possum bait drop is scheduled for the week ahead. Please keep an eye out for mustelids (stoats, weasels etc) and report any activity on the MERRA web site.

Speed along Ridge Rd and side streets

Just a reminder to residents and their visitors that the vehicle speed limit along much of Ridge Rd and all of the side streets is 50 kph. We have had complaints from walkers about excessive speeds witnessed on these roads. Your committee is loath to do anything at this stage except alert speeding drivers to slow down and observe the speed limit. Nobody wants to see other measures such as speed bumps, cameras or increased policing so please do your bit to keep vehicle speeds down.

Local Body Elections

Ballot papers will be posted out shortly for the Local Body Elections.

Residents have been invited to meet the candidates on Monday 19th September at the Mahurangi East Community hall between 7:30pm and 9pm. Supper will be provided (bring a plate).

Upcoming Events

Now is the time to put the following events in your diary:-

Annual Clean Up Day – November (date to be announced)

Annual Cricket Match at the MCG (Mahurangi Cricket Ground) – Sunday 1st January, 2017

Annual BBQ at Scott House – Sunday 5th March, 2017

MERRA Annual General Meeting at Scott House – Sunday 30th April, 2017

Everyone is welcome at these events.