

MERRA newsletter for November 2017

Welcome to New Residents: New Residents, MERRA committee members and neighbourhood support coordinators shared an enjoyable time over morning tea on 23 July. New residents appreciated the opportunity to meet others in the community. Thanks to organiser Susan Beer and to Mark Topping and Mari Ann Moss for hosting this event.

Neighbourhood Clean-up Day 29th October: Organised by David Legg, this annual event was smiled upon by good weather and a great turn-out of residents. A good haul of rubbish was collected but it is pleasing that volumes seem to be decreasing year on year. Thanks to David and all participants as well as Auckland Council for rubbish removal.

MERRA Website - www.scottslanding.org (from Mark Croft): You will have noticed on your way to the newsletter, that our web site has changed. This is in part due to our long standing website administrator John Waugh stepping down from the role but also because the software used to create and maintain the site has become obsolete and is no longer supported.

The community owes a great deal to John for making the website a credible asset for us all to use and also the countless hours he dedicated to populating its pages with useful and interesting content. Anyone who has read the vignettes will appreciate the huge commitment John made here to record local history for all to see. The present day information on a diverse range of subjects is also of enormous assistance to residents. We thank you most sincerely John for everything you have done to make the site as good as it is.

Mark Croft will be assuming the website administration role in the future. Because the technology now allows it, we hope that residents will engage on the site in the future. Posting messages, reacting to stories and generally visiting more often to see what's new. We welcome your feedback via the 'contact us' page or by making comments on the site posts directly.

Neighbourhood Support (from Susan Beer): It's been a quiet winter with no incidents reported in Scotts Landing. There was however theft of pump equipment from Lagoon Bay in the Te Kapa Inlet in July.

We are coming to the time of year when things go missing so don't be too relaxed about leaving equipment around especially along the shore. If you do have an incident please report to me as well as the Police so I can warn the neighbourhood.

On a more positive note the "Little Library" seems to be working fairly well although there have been some very old books there that I do have to take out to make room. Please don't use it as a convenient place to dispose of unwanted books. The Matakana School Gala or Hospice are good places to take books you can't bring yourself to just throw out.

Are you able to help?? Is there anyone who would like to share the role of Area Coordinator for Neighbourhood Support for Scotts Landing? I've set up the 12 groups with "Back Up" St. Coordinators but have no one to fill in when I'm away or eventually when I stand down. I've been doing it for four years now and feel it's time to get more people involved in not only in this role but CRG (Community Response Group) Fire Party, MERRA Committee, Plant and Pest Control, Boatwatch etc.

The more people who become involved will help to keep our community the special place we all love.

If you are interested please contact me for more details.

Thanks **Susan 0274312156**

Harbour Master news (from Jim Farnell): Auckland Council has made the following changes:

- Graham Kearney has resigned as Harbourmaster based at Sandspit
- Angela is now the mooring officer at Auckland Council and can be contacted on 094257315
- Kelly Hanson is a Skipper
- Gareth Williams (094487267) and Bruce Goff (093620395) from the Auckland Harbourmaster's office also are responsible for moorings.
- We no longer have our Visitors' Mooring (E150). It is now an emergency mooring under the control of the above gentlemen.
- The grid remains unmentioned and can still be booked through me (Jim Farnell 4255789).

Community Response Group; CRG - formerly Civil Defence (from Peter Seers)

- Chaired by Peter, this group helps prepare our community to get through any disaster with resources, training, planning and communication.
- Our CRG base is at Fergusson House (also the Civil Defence emergency meeting point) which will be opened in the event of any emergency. It is the meeting point for residents in the event of an emergency.
- Fergusson House contains equipment which will assist us in maintaining contact and directing emergency services in a disaster event.
- MERRA CRG has been instrumental in establishing East Rodney Community Resilience Volunteers Group (representing 11 local Community Response Groups from Waiwera to Leigh). This local CRG "Mothership" supports each of our local groups with collective training, resources and funding. The group's current project is to update all CRG readiness plans. The MERRA CRG is expecting to have completed its new plan in the first quarter of 2018.
- We always need more people to support our community by volunteering some time to help out with tasks such as radio checks, generator checks, and planning. Volunteering to assist with the MERRA CRG will commit maybe 1 hour per month of your time to a very worthwhile cause... US!

Scotts Landing Sign: The MERRA Committee and a volunteer community working group are now completing this two year project.

Stages included community engagement, a successful application for Rodney Local Board funding, volunteer working group activity, and a protracted Auckland Transport approval process.

The working group initially agreed themes for design and construction that included: "maritime, historic, coastal, robust, natural, simple, sophisticated, timeless". The result is a striking 'plinth with gaff sail' design referencing the area's history and its strong Maori and European maritime tradition. Likewise the dual names 'Scotts Landing' and 'Mahurangi' reflect both today's usage as well as the traditional Maori name for the area.



Historically ‘Mahurangi’ was also adopted (with various qualifiers such as ‘Heads’ and ‘East’) by earlier European settlers on the peninsular. Denham’s 1852 survey subdivided the peninsular for a settlement labelled ‘Village of Mahurangi’.

Over time the wider adoption of the names ‘Mahurangi’ and ‘Mahurangi East’ further afield may have diluted local identity, a catalyst perhaps to the ascendancy of the name ‘Scotts Landing’.

The name “MAHURANGI” in granite and capital letters is integral to the sign’s concrete plinth. It symbolises a strong and enduring connection with this land and extensive Maori history. By contrast the words ‘Scotts Landing’ are rendered in lowercase and on the sail. This placement suggests more recent arrival and a contrast in terms of connection and permanence. The contrast resonates with the Maori proverb “Whatungarongaro te tangata toitū te whenua” (As man disappears from sight, the land remains).

MERRA wishes to acknowledge:

*The **volunteer community working group** who responded to MERRA’s invitation to become actively involved in the project’s design and creation and gave freely of their skills and expertise:*

Alan Seelye (co-designer, landscaping)

Jude Nye (co-designer, safety management, steel treatment, landscaping)

John Waugh

Joy Paxton

Heather Sidders

Malcolm Scott (investigating timber supply options)

Penny Scott

MERRA Committee members for their decision-making and oversight of the project particularly those actively involved in process and construction:

Mark Croft (also a working group member)

David Legg (also helped with transport and purchasing)

Peter Seers

Chris Russell (site clearing/spraying)

Stuart Windross (working group convenor, MERRA's delegated project manager, working drawings, approvals, construction)

Others who volunteered their time or goodwill including:

Doug Hamilton (front end loader to instal the 'mast')

David Stevens (concreting working bees)

Lisa Hay from Mahurangi Oysters (surprise food and refreshments for the working bee)

Bruce Trethewy (snack delivery, organising and donating the granite 'MAHURANGI' sign)

Nick King and Jan Burbury for supporting the sign placement on their berm.

The many residents who helped in other ways or stopped to deliver encouragement and positive feedback

We also thank:

The **Rodney Local Board** for their \$2000 grant.

Bruce Anderson and Pinepac - www.pinepac.co.nz (for the generous donation of the mast timber that was especially milled and treated for the job)

Trent Mainwaring of Zenith Technica - www.zenithtechnica.com (for many hours preparing CAD Designs of the sail and organising its manufacture by Precision Laser Cutting - www.precisionlasercutting.co.nz)

Biomarine Ltd for the donation of oyster shells for landscaping.

Animal Pests (from Mark Croft): Sightings of or evidence of possums and mustelids have been happening over the past few months - this is not uncommon as food becomes scarce over the winter months. Our commitment to dropping bait targeting possums and rodents every change of season is still ongoing. We also have a number of possum and mustelid traps around the place.

Just a reminder that there is a reporting function on the MERRA web site for you to log animal pest incidents that allow us to monitor the peninsular and react to situations.

Plant Pests and the Ngaio Bay Reserve (from Chris Russell and Heather Mackay)

The weather is contributing to good weed growing conditions. If you have plant pests in your berm and are unsure how best to handle them Chris Russell (425 5672) can give you advice and has access to a limited stock of chemical spray supplied to MERRA for community use.

Be aware that as things become drier long grass in berms becomes a fire hazard.

Winter weather and overseas travel has slowed progress in Ngaio Bay Reserve however Thursday 26th of October was a 'putting in' instead of 'pulling out day'. Beckie (Ak Council Ranger and our advisor) supplied planting plans and over 100 native trees including Mahoe, Mapou, Kowhai and Puriri which the group carted, dug, planted and staked in areas that have been cleared largely of invasive jasmine and honeysuckle.



The Ngaio Bay Plant Pest working group meets every 2nd Thursday (next date November 23) in the Ngaio Bay carpark at 8.30am we finish around 11am (but when suits you). You are very welcome to join in bring gloves, sturdy footwear and energy your help will be much appreciated.

Dates to Remember: Ngaio Bay Reserve 8.30 am Thursday November 23; December 07,21

MERRA Noticeboard/bus shelter: In the new year the committee will initiate improvements to the existing MERRA noticeboard on the corner of Ridge Road and Charles St. The project aims to improve the watertightness and access to the noticeboard, provide shelter for local students waiting for the school bus, promote MERRA's website (www.scottslanding.org) and give more presence to local history.

Road/slip repairs: On 9 October MERRA formally wrote to Auckland Transport re-stating residents' concerns about the significant slips/subsidence near Bayley's Cottage, and in the vicinities of 501-7 and 449 Ridge Road. The letter included photos of the problems. We sought information about Auckland Transport's remedial plans. While some works have been undertaken subsequently on the lower and upper slips neither appear fully finished especially as far as edge barriers are concerned. The subsidence near 449 has simply been roughly patched again. As yet we have not had the courtesy of a reply from Auckland Transport but will continue to pursue this matter.

Broadband: MERRA continues to pursue improved broadband speeds particularly for residents who did not benefit from the improvements south of Charles St. As reported last time direct fibre connection for those north of Charles St has not been supported by providers despite Chorus & MERRA's work and good resident interest. However an upgrade of the cabinet at the top of Ridge Road did improve speeds from c 3 to c5 MBps. After further MERRA follow-up, Chorus has verbally proposed an alternative connection strategy that they use to set up new subdivisions. We are chasing the promised detail of this proposal so residents north of Charles St can gauge its workability for them.

Please become involved: Further to Heather, Peter and Susan's requests for assistance (above), we warmly invite you to join in MERRA's various projects and activities. It is a wonderful way to support and improve your community and get to know your neighbours. Whether it be the MERRA Committee, the Fire Party, Neighbourhood Support, Community

Response (Civil Defence), Pest control, Planting, the Website, or whatever we would love to have your input. Please don't be reticent... be in touch.

Upcoming Events to Diary:

- Ngaio Bay plant pest working group: Thursdays at 8.30am on November 23, December 07, 21
- Annual cricket match (all welcome) 1st January 2018, 11 Charles Street o the 'MCG' courtesy of the Clelands, subject to weather
- Annual BBQ 4th March, 2018 from 12 noon at Scott Homestead. Rain date booked for 11th March.
- AGM 22nd April, 2018 at 10:30am at Scott Homestead.

The MERRA Committee wish you all a happy Christmas and all the very best for the new year.

Stuart Windross

MERRA Chairperson

November 2017