



MERRA Newsletter – July, 2018

Welcome to winter..!

New Committee

A new committee was voted in at the annual general meeting held in April. Mark Croft was elected Chairperson, Heather Mackay re-elected Secretary and Susan Jelicich re-elected Treasurer. David Legg, Chris Russell, Peter Seers and Stuart Windross were re-elected and joining the Committee are George Ireland and Anna Friend. George was a co-opted member last year. Bruce Scoggins has been co-opted again this year to provide a connection for MERRA with the Warkworth Area Liaison group.

Retiring from the committee were Susan Beer and Mark Topping.

On behalf of the whole community, we express our thanks to Susan and Mark for their years of service on the Committee although both will continue to have roles to play in the future.

Broadband (via Stuart Windross)

Further to a MERRA request Chorus is scoping and testing the copper phone and broadband connections of residents north of 107 Ridge Rd where service remains appalling. We hope that this will result in these connections being switched to feed from the Charles St fibre-fed cabinet as is the case for the rest of the community. If actioned this will be an interim step pending the availability of free direct household fibre connections for all residential-area properties that is scheduled for 2022.

Community Response Group

Peter Seers and the CRG sub-committee have continued their work to consolidate our survival and emergency response plans. The group attended a lunch to the AGM this year which was well attended and offered the chance to talk to residents about their work.

Scotts Landing's efforts with Auckland Council have resulted in a significant area-wide cooperative structure chaired by Bruce Scoggins that has developed an excellent and supportive relationship with Auckland Council who are charged with carrying out effective Civil Defence for the city.

Noticeboard/bus shelter (Via Stuart Windross)



The revamp of the long-established MERRA noticeboard (Charles St corner) is nearly completed. Expanding on original plans and an AGM prompt from Joy Paxton, it now provides shelter and seating for school bus users & parents, 'Little Library' patrons, and walkers alike. The corten steel panels tie in with the 'Scotts Landing/Mahurangi' sign completed last year and highlight the MERRA community website. A permanent walking trail map (linked to more detail on our website) is proposed for the future. We aim to have the project completed this month.

Sincere thanks go to **Matakana ITM** for their very generous donation of timber and hardware. We also acknowledge a resident donation of \$150, and Denis Wilde, Chris Russell and Alan Seelye for donated timber, paint, safety gear and roofing. As usual much voluntary time and energy has been the key. Thanks go to working bee helpers/caterers Peter Seers, David Stevens, David Legg, Hugh Gladwell, Mark Croft, Chris Russell, Steve Stott, Sue Stevens and Karen Windross and to Stuart Windross (project leader).

Time to renew your MERRA membership (Via Susan Jelichich)

To those residents who have paid the \$12.00 annual subscription fee to renew or join MERRA , thank you for your continued support and for those of you who have added a little extra we appreciated the donation and will put this to good use in the community. If you have not received a subscription letter either by email or by hand please let Susan know by emailing merra.treasurer@gmail.com and we will make sure that one is sent out ASAP. Joining MERRA is a great way to support us to hold community events and undertake projects for everyone's benefits.

The Weather

Thanks to Nigel Varcoe and Janine Peters, live and historical weather data is now available for residents to view online. Visit <https://scottslanding.org/rainfall/> and scroll down to see links.

Plant Pests (Via Heather Mackay)

The Ngaio Bay group have been tediously tackling a very invasive vine at the entrance to the reserve. The vine is called *Malvaviscus Arboreus* (Turk's Cap) it has a broad leaf and a red flower. It's presence in the area is not limited to Ngaio Bay the picture below is taken on the roadside in Young Street. If it's around your place we would suggest removal – dig or cut, paste, spray and considerate disposal (i.e. not into neighbouring properties). The other picture is the area being cleared in Ngaio Bay we hope to complete clearing this area and also to plant more natives in areas which we concentrated on clearing last year through July/ August.

We meet every second Friday 8.30am at the Ngaio Bay carpark – next meeting July 06. You're very welcome to join in. Phone Heather (4256684) or Chris (4255672) who can also help with sprays and how to get rid of plant pests.



Further to the April newsletter, MERRA has worked with residents and Council to have the poisoned trees in Ngaio Bay Reserve removed. Our thanks to all of the residents who stepped up to affect a satisfactory solution.

Neighbourhood Support (via Anna Friend)

After holding the reigns for at least the last 5 years now Susan Beer has decided to call it a day to give her more time to focus on other things so I have eagerly taken on the role of your Neighbourhood Support Person and look forward to meeting many who I have not had the chance to do so yet in our 2.5 years of living up here.

With an increased number of properties on the market currently, I will ensure that between myself and the Group coordinators we are dropping off welcome packs and introducing ourselves to any new people.

MERRA and Neighbourhood Support continue to work to enhance security and liaise with the police (including the Boat watch Group in conjunction with Mahurangi West and the police “Deodar” crew) and I would encourage everyone to keep an eye out for any untoward behaviour and report it via our web site <https://scottslanding.org/contact/>

Boardwalk to Beach & Scott Point toilets

Anyone trying to access the beach will have noticed the boardwalk damage from a storm a few weeks ago. Council have already had a contractor assessing repairs and we are advised that restoration work will begin as soon as possible.

We have also received advice that planning work has been completed to repair the toilet block at the car park at Scott Point and that work will also be commencing as soon as possible.

Defibrillator

It's no secret that the installation of a defibrillator, provided to us by Auckland Council over 2 years ago has turned into a significant mission and has still to be installed for the benefit of the community. There has been movement in the last month however and MERRA expects that the issues preventing the commissioning of the unit will be resolved in the next few months.

Fire Team

MERRA's first response fire team continues to practise on the last Sunday of the off month. We are always looking for new volunteers to be trained on the equipment and protocols of a first response fire team so if you feel like making a small contribution to the Community 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.

Roading and Walkways (Via Stuart Windross)

Slip repairs near 449 Ridge Rd.

Downer's engineer has advised MERRA that due to further land movement their original retaining plans have had to be redesigned. Further geotechnical investigation is being done. Accordingly the works originally scheduled for June have been delayed but we are told they will be completed before year's end. In the meantime the removal of the traffic lights has improved flow but safety demands low speed and utmost caution.

Walkways

MERRA is working with Council's contracts coordinator in an attempt to reinstate regular maintenance of local walkways that have been neglected yet again since the change of contractors around a year ago.

Animal Pest Control

MERRA have developed a relationship with the Forest Bridge Trust who aim to encourage a healthy forest and flourishing indigenous wildlife area from the Kaipara to the Pacific Ocean – such area to include our community.

<https://theforestbridgetrust.org.nz/>

This relationship links in our efforts on predator control with their aims and also provides MERRA with local expertise and some resources to control animal pests.

At its meeting on May 17th this year, MERRA resolved **“That animal predators in the Scotts Landing area as defined as that area south of 332 Ridge Road on the east coast and 359 Ridge Road on the west coast be eradicated entirely by the end of 2022 and that such eradication be maintained thereafter”**. This step provides a goal for us to work towards and we are developing a plan now to target species and define strategies to achieve that goal.

As it happens, Auckland Council have also recently voted \$311 million in additional funding for biosecurity and it is likely that we will also benefit in some way from these funds to help us achieve a predator free’ status.

Watch out for news of a locally hosted animal pest workshop that Forest Bridge Trust will hold here to show people what they can do on their own property to make a contribution to our goal.

It’s winter and the time when rodents are most likely to come inside your home in search of warmth and food. Set traps and lay bait under houses and in ceiling cavities to reduce populations while they are visiting.

Presbyterian Cemetery

Some residents will be aware of the cemetery on the hill above the s-bend on Ridge Road but many do not. Driving out of the district, you may notice some steps cut into the hill on the left hand side of the road which is the only public access to the site. Visit our web site for more on the history of the site.

<https://scottslanding.org/mahurangi-heads-presbyterian-church-cemetery/>

MERRA has been approached by the Presbyterian Church with a request for assistance to maintain the cemetery and to possibly look at other options to use the land.

With so many settler family members buried there, MERRA sees value in assisting with the future maintenance and development of the site for the benefit of residents and so we have indicated our support to the Church. If you would like to register your interest to be involved in some way, please contact George Ireland at George@lawworksnz.com