



MERRA Newsletter – AUGUST 2019

MERRA is your community advocate that also organises community events and undertakes ongoing projects that enhance the peninsula and highlight the area's history.

Broadband

We continue to follow up Chorus in the hope that we may still get improvements in advance of the fibre to the door initiative due by 2021 (earlier advice was that this will happen 18 months after Snells/Algies which is currently underway).

Neighbourhood Support

Intel Reports – these are regular reports received from Rodney Neighbourhood which show any unsavoury behavior ie burglaries etc. Please remember to report any unusual vehicles or people unknown to you either by contacting Anna Friend via email merra.nhs@gmail or 021 770 042. Always try to capture a picture or registration where relevant and with the new 105 number a call to the police is an easy solution so they can investigate.

Life Tubes – we had a great presentation by Sue Robertson from Age Concern and those who attended received a tube and a pack of useful information – The life tubes are to be kept in your fridge and a red sticker placed on outside of fridge door so in any emergency where a medical person comes to your home they will immediately go there first to see if you have a tube. Inside the tube is a record of who you are, known medical conditions, Doctor, medication, allergies, next of kin etc. This form can be as comprehensive as you wish it to be and can also list any other information you may wish people to know in such circumstances. A separate listing will be on the MERRA website for your reference. If you wish to purchase these please contact ageconhast@xtra.co.nz and they come at a cost of \$2.00 per tube. It was suggested you may wish to think about also putting one in the glovebox of your car in case of an accident - a good thought.

Community Response Group

CRG again received funding from Auckland Council for our “Neighbours Day Gathering” which provided a light lunch for Scotts Landing residents attending the last MERRA AGM. The Auckland Council's focus on “getting through” has changed now from "prescriptive planning" to “understanding the needs and skills of others in our community”. This makes us ready to assist each other in difficult times. We encourage you to contact neighbours and your Neighbourhood support group to plan if you or others need assistance. Should you wish to be part of our Scotts Landing Citizens Response Group, please send your details through our website “contact” page

Safety Horns – are available through our website for purchase (\$20 each with additional horns \$10 each for same address). These provide a reliable means of contacting those close to you in an emergency. Three blasts on your horn (continuously spaced say every 30 seconds or so) should bring anyone within close proximity to you to provide assistance. Should you hear three horn blasts, (they should continue until help arrives) please attend to offer assistance. Please place your horn order through MERRA website <https://scottslanding.org/purchase-you-emergency-horn/>. Funds raised from horns will subsidise your First Aid refresher course.

First Aid Refresher – With the funds from the horns sales we will have a refresher First Aid training held by St Johns in the coming months. You will be contacted to attend when the dates and location is determined. Please ensure you have your horn to be included.

Defibrillator

MERRA have installed a Defibrillator at the Charles St bus shelter. Should you need the Defibrillator, please call 111 and ask for Ambulance, then request the code for the Defibrillator at Cnr Charles St and Ridge Rd, they will provide the code to you. We will hold several training sessions at the Defibrillator over the coming months, these will be advertised through our website and newsletters.

Roads and Walkways

MERRA continues to liaise with Auckland Transport and Council. Latest advice from the area engineer is:

- The large slip near Baileys Cottage is next in line for repair funding after a similar job in Sandspit. Design and funding approvals should be processed later in the year. It is a slow process but we will keep urging progress.
- The cracks in Ridge Road near the Macadamia Nut farm are apparently not a slip risk. ATs assessment is that they are more to do with trees sucking up groundwater. They are marked up for sealing with tar but it is slow happening.
- The dip near the cemetery steps is known and marked up for repair.

The strong impression in speaking with the engineer is that funding is hard to come by with Rodney Roads not getting the funding promised.

On a positive note MERRA wrote to thank AT and Downers for the quality job eventually done late last year in retaining the slip above 457 Ridge Rd.

Maintenance of parks and walkways has continued at a satisfactory standard since MERRA's last on-site meeting with the Council's contracts manager.

Cemetery Steps – The Next Building Project



We are thrilled to advise that the cemetery stairs project is now completed after a working bee in mid-July. We reshaped the contours of the track, installed 19 new timber risers fixed with 500mm long D12 re-bar spikes, and added half a cubic metre of MAP20 gravel to give a good surface. We reshaped the council roadside drain (blocked with a large load of plaster dumped by a generous passing tradie) to give better flow, and filled the 'pond' at the base of the new steps with surplus basecourse off the roadside.

It is all ready in time for the working bee in the cemetery itself on 24 August.

Thanks are due to Brett Brown for providing the re-bar and Mark Croft and Lindsay Crocker & Robyn Redford for timber. Thanks also to the 3 Davids - David Stevens, David Legg and Dave Sidders for their time and hard work this morning and to Sue Stevens for bacon butties and hot drinks for a much appreciated morning tea!!

Waste by Rail case

Waste Management has lodged its consent applications for its proposed new landfill in the Dome Valley. It is also seeking a private zoning change which means there will not be public notification nor opportunity for submission before October at the earliest. Consistent with the case outlined at <https://scottslanding.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/MERRA-Waste-by-Rail-to-Dome-Valley-case-revised.pdf> MERRA will be making a submission.

Even if environmental hurdles are cleared, we maintain that the huge increase in SH1 traffic that the landfill would generate (over 900! additional vehicles daily along SH1; two thirds of them heavy trucks) is unacceptable. We believe transporting Auckland's waste by rail must be part of any approval. Recent announcements about rail-upgrade funding in the budget, and Council declaring a 'climate emergency' can only enhance our position. See also: <https://www.localmatters.co.nz/news/31702-push-rail-service-to-proposed-landfill.html> and <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/111235239/moving-waste-by-rail-proposed-by-residents-concerned-about-dome-valley-landfill-traffic>

Fire Team

The fire crew has recently swelled with three new members Craig Maskell, Jon Whisker and Matt Buchanan who are undergoing familiarization with the kit and process for dealing with fires.

When they are up to speed Bill Townson (Fire Chief) will add their names to the contact schedule you have by your phone or can be downloaded from the MERRA website.

Practice is on the last Sunday morning of the uneven month and new participants are always welcome. If you would like to join the fun send Bill Townson bimon@xtra.co.nz with your details and an alert will be sent to you prior to the next practice.

Each practice concludes with a debrief and part of this is to look at ways to improve the process—You will see on the contact schedule that anyone alerting a fire must call the 111 service first so the real guys can be on their way and also for insurance purposes .—(Our fire party is not formally recognized so is in no way intended to substitute for the fire service so they must remain as the first in the callout priority.)

MERRA Membership

We would love to have more of our community on board with a MERRA membership so we are reaching out to encourage you to join or renew your MERRA membership subscription of \$12.00 per property. We recently emailed a letter with the details of the membership subscription and bank account for payment and had a flurry of responses but there is room for more so please consider joining MERRA. Thank you to everyone for your support by way of subscription and also to those who made an additional donation. The funds received are greatly appreciated and put to good use for the benefit of the community. If you don't have an email address, the subscription letter will be attached to this Newsletter and hand delivered, if you need to update your contact details or pay for subscription by means other than direct bank credit then you can drop them off to MERRA's treasurer Susan Jelichich at 74 Ridge Road or hand into your closest MERRA committee member.

Animal Pest Control

Our Predator Free 2023 campaign has started with a bang - or should that be a snap, with a substantial number of predators caught in our doc200 traps and in backyard traps managed by residents who have joined the effort. Since the program started we have dispatched 71 critters made up of 40 rats, 10 mice, 6 stoats, 10 weasels, 4 rabbits & 1 possum (caught on the border). This is simply outstanding and a great testament to the validity of the plan and the dedication of those volunteers who manage the trapping. Added to this of course, is the unknown number of rodents that we have killed via the 200+ bait stations we have across the peninsula.

We have every hope to see an increase in bird life this coming breeding season and into the future. Our thanks go out to everyone involved - the volunteers, the Forest Bridge Trust and Auckland Council.

If you would like to join the war effort and help us achieve predator free status by 2023 or you are concerned with animal pests on your patch, contact Mark Croft on 021-632-240 or mark.croft.ak@gmail.com to discuss.

Plant Pests

Ngaio Bay

The Ngaio Bay group are pleased with the growth of the natives that we planted last year in open and cleared areas. Last Friday Beckie the Ranger from Auckland Council kindly delivered the plants for this year and the group had a planting session. Our focus this season is largely on the banks bordering the paths to help stabilization. Once planting is complete we plan to continue to release these young plants from the ever and overgrowing weeds to encourage growth.

Plant Pests on Berms

We are considering a community weed "march" to focus on plant pests growing on verges and berms. Targeted will be tobacco, moth, gorse, privet, thistles and the like that we can access safely ideally at a time when cutting and pasting will be the most effective. In the future we plan to use the website as a means of you communicating where you feel we can help you or may need to take action to get rid of plant pests. We will advise this event in the MERRA website and on the noticeboard.

Scott House Gardens

Helen and Chris Russell have done a great job with some fresh planting in the front gardens at Scott House.

Advice on plant pest control and/or Pesticides is available from Chris Russell (4255672) and if you have a spare couple of hours to join either the weed march or the Ngaio Bay group or want to know more please contact Heather (4256684)

Rubbish

You may be aware that Mahurangi Wastebusters are taking over the operation of the refuse station in Lawrie Road. Opening on the 18th of July they are accepting only residential, small business rubbish and green waste only. The prices are \$28 for a car boot load, \$39 for a SUV/SW or \$28/cubic metre for green waste. We do encourage you to use this facility to dispose of green waste especially plant pests and those items which take forever to compost and create litter when dumped elsewhere. Please also consider depositing prepaid rubbish bags there instead of leaving on the roadside for several days. Want to know more? www.mahurangiwastebusters.nz

Achievements by MERRA

Walkways maintenance

Ngaio Bay beautification;

Toilets repairs at Scotts Landing; - thanks to Auckland Council

Walkway repairs at Scotts Landing; - thanks to Auckland Council

Pest Eradication Ongoing Programme

Scotts Landing sign – a great welcome to our community as people drive in

Charles St Bus Shelter and Share Table – big thanks to Stuart Windross

Little Library at Charles St Bus Shelter – somewhere for you to exchange a book while passing thanks to Susan Beer

Foreshore and roadside annual cleanup;

Cemetery Steps repairs – see separate item on this+

Fire Trailer Shed – reroofed recently

Upcoming Events

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

Cemetery Working Bee – 10.00am Saturday 24 August

New Resident Morning Tea – Sunday 10.00am 25 August

Road Clean Up – Confirmed 0900 3 November

Annual Cricket Match at the MCG (Mahurangi Cricket Ground) – It has been suggested that this now become a fishing tournament to allow more people to participate where possible. This is currently a work in progress and more information will be posted once finalised
