



**Community Newsletter from the Committee of the Mahurangi East Residents
& Ratepayers Association (MERRA)**

September 2024

www.scottslanding.org



MERRA Constitution Review



MERRA has commenced a review its constitution to comply with the new provisions of the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. We are aiming to have a draft constitution available for members to review later this year, with a view to adopting the new constitution in early 2025, ahead of our next AGM.

In the meantime, we have identified a number of issues which we would like feedback on, including some where we may wish to make changes from the current constitution (which is available on our website at <https://scottslanding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MERRA-Rules-Constitution.pdf>

- Objects (section 2 of the existing constitution): are the current objects still relevant, or are there any that we wish to add or amend?
- Membership eligibility: Currently membership is open to any resident or ratepayer in the area south of Martins Bay Road (excluding the Martins Bay settlement). Where a property has more than one ratepayer (or resident), then those ratepayers (or residents) shall collectively constitute one Member. Should these arrangements be simplified?
- Subscriptions and Voting: Currently subscriptions are payable per property (i.e. only one subscription per property), and voting is limited to two votes per property. Should this remain?
- Election of Executive: at present, the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are all elected at the AGM. An alternative is for the AGM to elect the Committee, and for the incoming Committee to elect the executive positions.
- Term limits: should the constitution include term limits on Committee and executive members?
- Quorums: the current constitution provides for a Committee of up to ten members, with a quorum of five or more. For the AGM, the quorum is nine members. Should these provisions be retained?
- Transaction limit: Should there be a limit on the value of transactions that the Committee can enter into without reference to the membership via a General Meeting? If so, how much?
- Notice periods: how much notice should be required in advance of the General Meetings, or for any proposed amendments to the Constitution?

Please let us have your thoughts on these and any other issues that you would like us to consider in the review by emailing merrasecretary@gmail.com, no later than **11 October 2024**. The Committee will carefully consider all suggestions before issuing a draft constitution later this year.

MERRA Projects



Thanks to those who responded to our request in the last newsletter for suggestions for MERRA projects and activities. The Committee considered a range of suggestions at our last meeting, and decided to progress the following:

- Walkway maintenance and development team (see item below)

- Library of Things (see item below)
- Community Facebook page trial (see item below)
- Updated MERRA membership database – this will help MERRA manage and communicate with its membership more efficiently in future.

We are also awaiting further information on some other projects that are under consideration, so watch this space for more details.

The MERRA Committee is always open to suggestions for projects and activities, so feel free to get in touch with any suggestions to merrasecretary@gmail.com.

Walkway Maintenance and Development



Several suggestions for MERRA projects related to walkway maintenance and/or development, so MERRA has decided to set up a team to focus on this. In the short term, priority will be on tidying up Cardiac Bypass (the steep track between Ridge Road and Young Street, via the Duke Street paper road) and repairs to the track from Schoolhouse Bay to Williams Street, alongside Burton Wells Scenic Reserve. Other projects will be prioritised once these are completed.

We will be working in with Auckland Transport, Auckland Council and DOC to ensure that our actions are coordinated with the maintenance activities of those organisations.

We expect this work will be undertaken through a series of working bees, so if you are keen to join the team (on a regular basis or just on occasions) please get in touch via email at merra.events@gmail.com – we would love to hear from you.

Library of Things

Your MERRA Committee has decided to trial a Library of Things. Most of us lend things to our friends and neighbours from time to time. The idea of a Library is to extend that a bit wider and cut down on the need for trips into Snells, Warkworth or beyond to hire or buy equipment, tools etc. for occasional use.

There are a number of examples elsewhere, including the Auckland Library of Tools, and you can see how that works here: <https://www.aucklandlibraryoftools.com>.

The Scotts Landing Library would operated differently, in that MERRA would maintain a register of things which have been offered by residents, but the borrowing itself would be a matter of agreement between individuals. The register would be available on the Scotts Landing website (<https://scottslanding.org>) and via the new Scotts Landing Facebook page. Listings would include a description and photo of the item, and any conditions of borrowing. To avoid security issues, the owner and contact detail would not be shown on the website, but would be obtained by contacting the Librarian (in the first instance, Nick Dibley).

We expect the register to have categories similar to Auckland's Library of tools, but fewer in number. We expect to start off with gardening, building equipment, hobbies & crafts, emergency equipment. Our first thought is that items which most of us have like lawn mowers, electric drills etc would not be included, but that is not set in stone.

A few rules:

- a) MERRA involvement will be limited to maintaining the register and putting borrowers in touch with lenders. It will not offer any assurance as to availability, fitness for purpose, condition etc.
- b) the owner of listed items will not be obliged to lend the item to everyone. It is up to lender and borrower to reach agreement.
- c) of course we would expect items to be returned in the same condition as when borrowed.

And a few things for lenders:

- d) only list items which are fit for purpose and reliable. Probably don't list vehicles, items which can easily be misused or damaged, or require more training to use than can be provided in a ten-minute hand over, require significant practice to use, family heirlooms, etc.
- e) do mention any conditions or limitations of borrowing which may include maximum time of loan, requirement to return batteries charged, fuel replenished etc., borrower to provide their own consumables/blades etc.
- f) do make sure items are clean, and ready for use

And for borrowers:

- g) return items on time, cleaned and own up to any damage or issues.

If you'd like to offer items for the Library or have any queries or suggestions, please contact Nick Dibley at nick.dibley@outlook.com

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Community Facebook Group



Have you ever wanted to get in touch with others in Scotts Landing to let people know about an upcoming event, locate a missing pet, arrange a lift, or just share a piece of news or a photo with the community? Well, now you can, by joining the new Scotts Landing Facebook group. The aim of the group is to help keep our community connected, so that we can look out for each other and help our neighbours when needed.

There are a few rules that group members will need to observe, but the overall aim is to create a positive and helpful space where we can stay connected to those around us. You can join up by searching Scotts Landing on Facebook.

Labour Weekend Weed Blitz



Following from our successful Easter weed blitz, MERRA is organising a spring follow-up, with a skip available to take your pest weeds this coming Labour Weekend, 26-28 October 2024.

Pest weeds are those considered to be invasive and a threat to our environment if not controlled. We are again targeting Wild Ginger, Woolly Nightshade (tobacco plant) and Agapanthas (flower stems only please). You should also be on the lookout for monkey apple, cotoneaster, Chinese privet, tradescantia, moth plant, gorse, jasmine, and bush lawyer.

For information on what these species look like, and how best to dispose of them, check out the plant pest information on the MERRA website ([link here](#)), or the Auckland Council site [here](#).



Arrangements are the same as last time: we will have a 9m3 Northland Waste skip placed on the gravel patch leading to the stock yard at Rosedale (9 Charles Street) from Saturday 26th to Monday 28th October. Residents are welcome to dispose of your pest weeds into the skip over the long weekend.

For this initiative to succeed, it's really important that we only use the skip to dispose of pest weeds. Please do not dispose of any plastic bags (your weeds need to be emptied out), household rubbish, construction rubbish, garden rubbish especially flax, cabbage tree fronds, grass clippings, prunings and weeds (excluding pest weeds). In short, if you see it on the Auckland City Council Weed Pests page or on the Scottslanding.org website you can put it in the bin. NOTHING ELSE, no exceptions.

Please also respect the area surrounding the bin and keep it tidy.

Should you want to make a head start, fill up plastic bags ready for when the bin is available. If you're unsure how to treat and dispose of pest weeds, give Chris Russell a call on 027 4933881.

MERRA acknowledges the support of Northland Waste and Chris and Helen Russell for this initiative.

Help out your MERRA Committee

Your MERRA Committee is always on the lookout for people who are keen to help out and supplement the skills that we have available of the Committee, and to step into roles once the current committee members decide to move on. We are particularly keen to find someone interested in the Treasurer's role, who can shadow Debbie Mickelborough for the remainder of this Committee term. Please contact merra.treasurer@gmail.com to discuss this further.

We would also love to hear from anyone with website development skills who might have time to assist us in maintaining our website at scottslanding.org. You can contact us on merra.web@gmail.com.

North Shore Hospital Healing Garden



Last year MERRA encouraged local residents to contribute to a Healing Garden at North Shore Hospital, in memory of local resident and MERRA Committee member Lindsay Crocker, who passed away in May 2023. These contributions have helped the Garden become a reality, and the photos show the opening day of the Healing Garden at the newest hospital building on the North Shore Hospital campus. The healing garden is even larger than anticipated and absolutely fits the bill as a calming peaceful haven amongst the stress and anxiety of the hospital environment.

Lindsay’s wife Robyn says “My profound thank you to all dear local residents and friends who contributed individually and or as part of their MERRA participation to such a worthy and meaningful cause. Lindsay’s photo and acknowledgment is currently on a screen near the entrance, but longer term will be more permanent”.

Last Call for Native Plant Funding



Over the past three years, MERRA has facilitated the distribution and planting of over 6,000 native plants on Scotts Landing properties as part of the Mahurangi Land Restoration Programme (MLRP). This is a \$5 million, 5-year long programme aimed at reducing sediment entering the harbour. Funding is available for landowners to plant native trees in locations that will help to prevent runoff into waterways.

2025 will be the final year of the programme, so if you would like to take part, don't delay.

While the plants themselves are funded by MRLP, landowners are responsible for ground preparation, planting and maintenance, including seasonal weed releasing around the new plants. The MLRP Land Advisor and Planting Coordinator will visit each property to map the planting area, assess the site requirements and discuss site preparation (including weed control required prior to planting) with each landowner. Each site also has an archaeological assessment, to ensure that planting will not disturb any archaeological sites.

A plant list is developed for each property following the site visit and is based on what grows naturally in the local area, in the applicable habitat type (for example, cliff face, coastal margin or coastal forest).

If you would like to discuss the project or apply for some plants for next year, please email merra.localnetwork@gmail.com.

Health and Safety Guidelines



MERRA takes health and safety seriously for all its residents, and in particular those who volunteer their time on a range of activities on behalf of the community.

MERRA have developed a set of health and safety guidelines which should be read generally but definitely when undertaking volunteer work such as animal or plant pest work, community clean-ups and track maintenance. MERRA periodically reviews the guidelines to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

We encourage you to check these out on our website at <https://scottslanding.org/merra-health-and-safety-guidelines/>

Save the Date

Saturday 5 October (and Saturday 26 October 2024 – of the weed bin closer to home). Plant release working bees at Mahurangi East Regional Park (contact merra.events@gmail.com if you would like to help)

26-28 October 2024 – Labour Weekend Weed Blitz (skip available at 9 Charles Street)

Sunday 2 March 2025 – MERRA Picnic, Scott House 12 noon - 2.00pm

3 - 7 March 2025 – Auckland Council Inorganic Rubbish Collection (bookings essential - [online here](#))

Sunday 4 May 2025 – MERRA Annual General Meeting, Scott House 10.30 am