

Notes of the Sounds Advisory Group Public Meeting, held at Rai Valley on 20 March 2017 at 1.00 pm

Present

Christine Tuffnell, Geoff Allison, Marg Allison, Ian Montgomery, Nora Flight, Lyn Sadd, Ken Sadd, Owen Young, Jan Young, Phil Green, Wilma Green, Beryl Archer, Lesley Davies, D Booth, Graham Spall, Clare Ballinger, Vicki Rushby, Max Clarke, Marilyn Clarke, Brian Pagen, Jane Nichol, Councillor Trevor Hook, Steve Murrin (Marlborough Roads), Ross Withell, Rob Schuckard, Linda Booth, Kristen Gerard, Tim Greenhough, Eric Jorgenson, Shelly Sidley (DOC), Raymond Smith, Poneke Rene and Ken Roush

MDC Staff

Alan Johnson, Alec McNeil, Steve Ulrich and Rebecca Waldron (Secretary)

Apologies

Councillor David Oddie, Councillor Nadine Taylor, Councillor Jenny Andrews, Monyeen Wedge, Ian Mitchell, Dave Hayes, Rachel Drake, Debbie Stone and Vic Koller

Welcome

Councillor Trevor Hook introduced himself as Chairman of the Sounds Advisory Group(SAG) and spoke on the role of the Group which had been set up to provide a conduit between Council and Sounds communities. Once or twice a year a SAG meeting is held out in one of the Sounds communities and the afternoon is set aside for members of the community to come and air local issues and have questions answered.

Members of the Sounds Advisory Group introduced themselves.

Recycling

Ian Montgomery opened discussion with a question on the reason for recycling bottles into separate colours in Marlborough. Alec McNeil clarified that the process used in Marlborough is scaled to what the rate payer base can afford and that the sorted bottles are remade into bottles in Auckland. He noted that curb side collections in Blenheim and Picton are currently under review.

Roading

Ken Sadd asked what level of service the Opouri Road contractor is paid to provide and what frequency are they required to patrol the network and perform basic maintenance. Steve Murrin clarified that the roads are categorised from 1 (highways) to 6 (gravel roads). Opouri Road is classed as Level 5 and should be kept in a reasonable condition with an allowance of up to five potholes per km. The road should be inspected at least once per month. Consultation is beginning soon on the level of service provided.

Ken asked if there is a separate fund for storm events. Steve clarified that currently the contractor is expected to respond to events such as fallen trees as soon as possible. If after a storm or other event, the damage is more than 10% of the total maintenance budget then funding is available from the Government.

Ken asked if the network is audited prior to contractors receiving their payments. Steve clarified that a random audit is carried out looking at 5% of the network every month.

Road classification is changing throughout the country. State Highways will continue to be funded by the Government.

It was noted that Opouri Road has no drains and the sealing is rough and getting narrower every time it is sealed. Steve commented that this is disappointing and that he will look into this.

Chris Tuffnell asked if the isolation of communities is taken into account when their access road is cut off? Steve replied that it is always a priority to get roads open even if it is only to a single lane.

Ian Montgomery noted that the water tables have not been cleaned out for several years on Ronga Road and that some damage on the road has been caused by spill overs because the water tables are full. Steve noted that this issue will be addressed with the new contracts and that drainage will be incentivised.

Steve clarified that road markers are paid in lump sum contracts and if they carry out work which is subsequently sealed over it is their own mistake which they will be rectifying at their own cost.

Salmon Farms

Graham Spall asked if any salmon farms are complying with their resource consents and if not what is the reason for moving them all to one area? Councillor Hook answered; salmon farms are in general complying with their consents, however there are some technical issues with complying with the Benthic Best Practice Guidelines. The Salmon Farm process is being led by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and that the suggestion is; to move the existing salmon farm positions which are not complying and are mainly in low flow sites to other areas. There are six areas identified for consultation.

Eric Jorgenson commented on the situation. There are three parts to the process.

1. The new farms which have been implemented under the EPA process are compliant. (This was disputed by some attendees at the meeting as there has not yet been a monitoring report produced).
2. Most of the originally consented farms which are still in operation are complying with their resource consents but not complying with Benthic Best Practice Guidelines. These are the farms which may be moved. Eric noted that the work to determine whether the sites were viable economically and environmentally sustainable while complying with Benthic Best Practice Guidelines was never completed.
3. The Salmon Working Group concluded that:
 - a. There is uncertainty whether existing sites can be farmed environmentally and also be economically sustainable.
 - b. They identified potential sites but noted that these sites also have issues.

A question was asked: "Why isn't the Marlborough District Council leading the challenge to say the potential sites are going to pollute the Pelorus Sounds/Te Hoiere?"

Councillor Hook replied that although the Council is not leading the response they do have a response. He made these points:

1. The Council will submit to the Panel and highlight the Plan (Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan and Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan). The Minister will make the decision and doesn't have to take the recommendation of the Panel.
2. Council may also make comments around navigational safety.

There was discussion on the potential pollution that could be caused by the open cage system and a question was asked on how many tonnes of feed the Council is prepared to accept in the Pelorus Sound/Te Hoiere. Rob Schuckard responded; that the modelling that has been done on the possible increase (which could be four to five times the present amount of 5700 tonnes) is problematic. He suggests making a submission, as there is uncertainty about the outcome for the Sounds.

Other Issues

The Proposed Marine Protected Areas Act is currently stalled. There were 4000 – 5000 submissions received (including from Marlborough District Council). The Marlborough Integrated Trust is going to be looking at the issue of a Maritime Park, and holistic planning for the Sounds over the next nine months.

Nora Flight noted that the Penzance Bay Residents Association was not notified of the Hearing of the Proposal for a New Jetty at Penzance (Betty Archer Reserve). Alan Johnson is going to look into this.

Foreshore Issues

Shelly Sidley was asked about the foreshore clearing at Penzance. Shelly is aware of this issue and noted that DOC has been working on the Sounds Foreshore Improvement Project to ensure a consistent and fair approach. Shelly clarified that infringements will be addressed on a case by case basis and that she will be working with community groups generally.

The Sounds Foreshore Reserve is in place to protect public access.

Freedom Camping

Freedom camping issues in Rai Valley Te Aumiti/French Pass, Tennyson Inlet were discussed.

- Brown River Reserve – a comment was made that it is sometimes unsafe because there are too many vehicles parked for someone to be evacuated if they became ill or were injured.
- Okiwi Bay – Freedom Campers observed tipping waste down public toilets.
- It was noted that there is a dump station at the service station in Havelock.

Civil Defence

Bruce Pagen from the Marlborough Emergency Management Centre was welcomed to the meeting. Since the 14 November earthquake he has been working with community groups in the Sounds to help prepare their evacuation plans. The Emergency Management Team can help with templates, maps and printing. He noted that plans that had been prepared in early 2000s may need to be updated. He commented on the resilience of Marlborough Sounds residents. If community groups would like help with their emergency plans they can get hold of Bruce by ringing Marlborough District Council on 520 7400.

Pest Control Programme

The supply or loan of traps was discussed. The Significant Natural Areas Programme receives funding for trapping, fencing, weed control etc. Money has been allocated through the Annual Plan process to groups for pest control. Picton Dawn Chorus has recently received funding through this process.

Councillor Hook noted there is a community grants scheme. It was noted that a register of interest for a community grant from Tennyson Inlet was not followed up.

Alan noted there is an effort being made to co-ordinate approaches to planning. The Te Tau Ihu Project is an example; DOC, Marlborough District Council, Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council and Iwi are involved, looking at conservation strategies for the whole top of the south. A collaborative approach may attract funding from bigger organisations such as Predator Free NZ.

The new role of Bio-Diversity Co-Ordinator has been created by Council which is there to assist communities.

Councillor Hook thanked Steve Murrin, Alec McNeil and Bruce Pagen for attending the meeting.

1. Actions from the Meeting

No	Action	Person Responsible
1.	Look into notification process for Penzance Bay jetty resource consent	Alan Johnson

The meeting closed at 2.40 pm.

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