Welcome to the February 2016 issue of the Port Underwood Association newsletter.

**Port Underwood Association**

The summer weather has been a little variable this year, as I write it is pouring with rain. No doubt it will be sunny tomorrow. I hope that those who have visited the Port have enjoyed their stay.

The newsletter will be brief, as a significant amount of the relevant content is in the minutes. Please look at the minutes even if you did not attend the meeting. The minutes contains details of the committee, roading, the draft resource management plan, meetings regarding Tsunamis etc.

Contributions are welcome from all members at any time. These can be made at any time to our e-mail address port.underwood.association@gmail.com or direct to committee members.

Best wishes John

**Newsletter contents**

Draft Marlborough resource management plan

Roads

Freedom camping

Fibre Optic internet

Recreational Fishing Marine Park

Marlborough Marine Futures

Neighbourhood support

Subscriptions

Snippets from the past

Minutes of the 2016 AGM

**Port Underwood Association contact details:**

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www.portunderwoodassoc.org

**Draft Marlborough Resource Management Plan**

The draft Marlborough Resource Management Plan will hopefully be made public in early 2016 and open for public submissions for three months. Application has been made to the Council for them to notify us when the plan is open for submissions.

Although the Port Underwood Association has made submissions already this will be our final opportunity to make comment on aspects that impact us. This includes roads, potential development, fishing, landscape, water quality etc. We will need your help with this to make sure we represent your views.

Part of the document (still subject to change before release) is available from the Marlborough District Council website at

<http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Your-Council/RMA/Review-of-Resource-Management-Documents.aspx>

**Roads**

The council is unaware of any problems with the roads. No incidents have been reported to them or the police regarding accidents or near misses. This has an important impact upon the council’s views with respect to developments in the area. To assist the committee in making the case that the road facilities do not support extensive development any incidents should be reported to the police. Alternatively you can notify the committee or complete the form on the website so we can collate the relevant information. The form is at: <http://www.portunderwoodassoc.org/?page_id=4>

**Freedom Camping**

The Freedom Camping bylaws are currently under trial. Camping is permitted in Port Underwood except on some DOC land (such as at Hakahaka Bay) and two sites in Ocean Bay. If campers are found causing problems in the Port these should be reported to the Council (or to DOC if on DOC land) on 03 5207400. The registration number of the vehicle should be obtained if possible. Some members have already reported illegal camping (and you may have seen the article in the press regarding this).

The Freedom Camping bylaws can be found at: [http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Recreation/Parks-and-Reserves/Camping/Freedom-Camping-Bylaw.aspx](http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Recreation/Parks-and-Reserves/Camping/Freedom-Camping-Bylaw.aspx%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

The Association will be making a submission on this topic and your views are sought. Submissions are due by 8 April. We would need submissions at least a week before then.

**Fibre Optic Internet**

As many of you will be aware, the main fibre optic cable for the South Island runs through Port Underwood. A view was expressed at the AGM that the Association should approach Chorus regarding internet nodes in bays. Where sufficient people want access to the fibre optic cable the creation of a node is viable. So, if any members want the Association to contact chorus to see if access to fibre optic internet is possible, please contact the Association giving your name, contact number and the bay where you would like access.

**Recreational Fishing Park**

The proposed recreational fishing park does not include Port Underwood and information has been sent to all members and will not be repeated here. The committee has been mandated to seek further information regarding the proposed park from the ministry, Minister and our MP. In addition, we will lobby our MP for the inclusion of the Port in the park. A survey of members was undertaken and 22 responses received. These can be summarised as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Question | Yes | No |
| 1 | I am a member of the Port Underwood Association  | 22 | 0 |
| 2 | Do you support the establishment of a Recreational Fishing Park in the Marlborough Sounds?  | Only if it includes PU – 12Even if it excludes PU - 12 | 1 |
| 3 | Do you fish - recreationally | 21 | 1 |
|  | Do you fish - commercially | 0 |  |
| 4 | The park should ban all commercial fishing including shellfish fishing | 15 |  |
|  | The park should ban all commercial fishing but permit shellfish fishing | 5 |  |
|  | The park should permit limited commercial fin fish fishing | 1 |  |
| 5 | Should all oil/gas/mining vessels be banned from the fishing park | 21 | 1 |
| 6 | Should the park be expanded to include PU | 21 | 1 |
| 7 | Would you support a fin species park even if it meant banning set netting | 10 | 10 |
| 8 | Should further information be obtained from |  |  |
|  | Ministry | 20 |  |
|  | Minister | 20 |  |
|  | Local MP | 20 |  |
| 9 | Should the MP be contacted regarding the inclusion of PU in the park | 21 | 1 |

Some comments were also made by respondents, all advocating the banning of commercial fishing in the Port.

**Marlborough Marine Futures**

The Trust ahs recently written to Ministers regarding the Benthic Environment of the Sounds. The Trust has also stated that new rules and regulations are due to hit the deck early in the New Year. Scientists in the Sustainable Seas Science Challenge will swing into action, and there should be an understanding of the new information they will deliver over the next three years. The trustees are considering the best strategic response possible with their limited resources but remain committed to the Trust Deed and will continue to stand for integrating management and sustaining the productive ecological base of the Marlborough Marine environment.

The first meeting of the forum in 2016 will be on Sunday 28 February.

Marlborough Marine Futures has its own website and this has information about all the meetings and what it is trying to achieve: <http://www.marlmarinefutures.co.nz/>

It should also be noted that there is an opportunity to hear from ministers about proposals for the management of marine areas. This is at 11:30 on 11 February at the Scenic Hotel on Marlborough with a special focus on the proposed recreational fishing parks at 5:30 to 7:30pm – see [http://www.mfe.govt.nz/node/21455](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/node/21455%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). There is a consultation document available (<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/marine/new-marine-protected-areas-act-consultation-document>) and submission can be made up until 11 March 2016.

**Neighbourhood support update**

Unfortunately, 2016 hasn’t started out very well. We have already had one break in on or about January 19th.., A suspicious white van was seen in the vicinity at the time. The bolts were cut on the gate to gain entry to the property and electrical goods and booze were stolen from the house. If you saw anything suspicious around that time, would you please let the police and Sara know about it.

**Subscriptions for 2016**

The 2016 Port Underwood Association subs of $20 are now due. The $20 subs can be paid by direct deposit to Westpac Blenheim 030599 0216931 00 quoting Bay and Surname as a reference. Alternatively you can post a cheque, along with your sub notice, to the Secretary, Port Underwood Association, P.O. Box 59, Blenheim 7240.

We do thank you for your continued support.

**Snippets from the Past**

**SHIP WRECKS AND SCUTTLED BOATS OF PORT UNDERWOOD**

In 1871 the 22 ton ketch Angelina was loaded with timber and broke up in Whangatoetoe Bay.

In 1873 the Ketch Kestrel of Nelson was on a voyage from Wellington to Havelock when the weather turned into a huge storm. The captain took shelter in Cloudy Bay and then Ocean Bay where he put out two anchors, but the vessel began to drag. Charles Aldridge and his father came out from shore to help run out a warp and a third anchor. Unfortunately early the next morning she parted her warp and dragged towards the rocks at the Northern point of Ocean Bay. Again, Charles Aldridge, his father and now Joseph Flood all tried in vain to tow the Kestrel off the rocks. The captain abandoned the vessel as it was about to break up. Later, he salvaged what he could and then sold the rest of the wreck at Auction.

In1886 the captain of the 23 ton ketch the Thames mistook the low saddle of the neck as being the entrance to Port Underwood. All of the crew survived but the ship broke up and lost its load of timber. Locals salvaged what timber they could.

In 1923, the Blackball, an ex-coal hulk, was to be towed from Wellington to the Wairau for River protection but was unable to get into the Wairau Bar. They anchored the Blackball in Port Underwood, but the anchor was inadequate and it drifted and then grounded on Blackball Point. Useful parts were taken by locals and the hulk was burned to the waterline.

Still seen today are the scuttled Alameda and Holmwood in Cutters Bay. Both were built in the States and were used for world trading until they were converted to coal hulks by their individual New Zealand owners. They were towed to Cutters Bay from Wellington and were broken up and salvaged, and then burnt by the residents of Port Underwood in 1941.

Contributions to the Snippets from the past would be much appreciated.

**AGM 2016 minutes**

**Minutes**

**Twenty Third Annual General Meeting**

 **Port Underwood Association Inc**

 Held at Hakahaka Bay, Port Underwood

3 January 2016 3pm

**Present**

Wayne Boustridge, Angela Hockenhull, David A Whyte, Steve Beaumont, Sue Beaumont, Donald Soper, Claire Soper, David McBryde, Ken Prain, Penny Martin, Graeme Martin, Bryon Gleeson, Ruth Simonsen, Diane Cranfield, John Cranfield, Gerard Malcolm, Susan Rutherford, Paul Blaschke, Michael Blaschke, Lawry Hinton, Jenny Kennedy, Jeremy Ward, Graeme Gane, Raewyn Gane, Laurin Gane, Ken Roush, Sara Roush, John Davison

**Apologies**

Helen Parr, Trevor Parr, Carole McArthur, Arch Still, Mary Still, The Forests, Mike Milligan, The Sheats, Carolyn McIvor, Murray McIvor, Irene Ross, Rosemary Rutherford, Mike Rutherford, Greg Phillipson, Annabel Phillipson, Annie Ward, Doug Levein, Rhonda Levein

**Minutes of the previous meeting**

These were distributed with the newsletter in February 2015 and consequently were not read at the meeting. There were no matters arising.

**Chairman’s report – John Davison**

Lawry Hinton & Jennie Kennedy were thanked for the use of their home for the AGM.

A brief summary of what has happened throughout the year was given. This included:

Marlborough Marine Futures Forum

Ken (Roush) and I have attended the Marlborough Marine Futures Forums. These are developing slowly to ensure they are inclusive, cover the issues that stakeholders want to be covered and are accepted by all stakeholders. The forums to date have tried to identify who should be invited to attend. They are now looking at what scientific knowledge there is, and what information needs to be found.

However, it could be in the context of Port Underwood that there is a potential perfect storm brewing in terms of an ecological disaster; low flow, relatively warm currents in summer, forestry on steep slopes in the catchment area, large volumes of shellfish farms, receiving significant sedimentation loads from the Awatere and Wairau Rivers, a perception of dwindling finfish stocks and it being a low priority area for research.

There have been a number of subdivisions or applications. These are:

Oyster Bay - Environmental Court arbitration proceeded and the outcome was not satisfactory. Despite the planting scheme being volunteered by the applicant the Council did not then object to it being reduced significantly. The arbitrator would not accept anything other than the Association accepting this unless some from of evidence could be produced to say why the alteration was unacceptable rather than requiring the appellant/applicant to produce reasons why the alteration should be accepted. The applicant made an assurance that the development would not be visible from the road under the new planting scheme.

Whataroa Forest - This has been subdivided into 30 hectare sections. Gerard Malcolm is a member of the Association and part owner of the property and discussed this development later in the AGM. This subdivision is a permitted activity so was approved by Marlborough District Council with no comments invited from third parties.

Ophi Bay

The application has been returned to the applicant as incomplete to the developers so is not before the council. The application was made (it is believed) as the old consent was expiring. This would not normally be publicly notified as the land is zoned as residential. The council will take the points raised by the Association (to respect the gravesite, issues with effluent and road issues) when considering if it needs to be publicly notified and accepted that the applicant would need to preserve the gravesite from damage. The problems with the roads being closed due to bridges being washed out and land slips and also the increasing levels of traffic caused by new developments was also mentioned as a bar to future development. The Council just referred the Association to make submissions to the Council Development Plan.

**Treasurer’s report – Sara Roush**

The accounts were distributed. These are attached at the end of the minutes.

**Membership secretary report – Sara Roush**

There are currently 112 paid up members; the secretary was available to collect subscriptions. $20 seems like a good subscription amount as it provides a small surplus which is to be retained in case costs are incurred (for example for submissions). Members seem to be enjoying the snippets from the past in the newsletter, but more stories are required.

**Neighbourhood support – Sara Roush**

Craig Jones burgled four houses in Port Underwood last year and pleaded guilty to 24 counts of burglary throughout the Sounds plus three counts of stealing motor vehicles. He has thirty previous convictions for similar offences and was out on bail for another burglary at the time of his offending. He was sentenced to three years and six months in prison. The Judge stated it was not realistic to ask him to pay reparations to any of the victims.

Thanks were given to all who wrote down vehicle registration numbers and were observant of suspicious activities. Because of this, within 48 hours of Craig Jones offending in Port Underwood he had been positively identified as being in the area and a prime suspect.

Members were invited to take Neighbourhood Support signs.

**Sounds Advisory Group – Ken Roush**

A large effort has been put into the draft Marlborough Resource Management Plan reviewing various chapters and making suggestions which I will cover shortly. The group has been made aware of several scientific advances in our knowledge of the Marlborough Sounds. This includes a hydromechanics modelling program to determine the water flow and exchange in different parts of the Sounds. There is also work on drilling the seabed floor to determine historic changes in the Sounds and a study on sedimentation entering the coastal waters from land uses. There was also a presentation of significant marine sites in the Sounds. We also had updates on the Integrated Management Plan for the marine environment and a review of the National Environmental Standard for forestry.

**Draft Marlborough Resource Management Plan – Ken Roush**

This is a very important document, which will govern what can be done and how it can be done in Marlborough. It sets the objectives, the reasons and the rules. The draft is proposed to be released to the public in January with a three-month window for receiving submissions from the public, which will be followed by a hearing of the submissions and final ratification. The PUA committee has made submissions in the formation stages of this document based on feedback from the members. Does the membership want to have some special meetings to discuss this document and any future submissions on behalf of the Association?

**Significant marine areas in Port Underwood – Ken Roush**

There exists at least three areas in Port Underwood that carry a significant marine site designation and two of them are considered susceptible to damage from anchoring, dredging and trawling. They are located off the Knobby’s and Whataroa Bay and contain some of the best massive tubeworm mounds in the Marlborough Sounds.

**Freedom camping – Ken Roush**

Marlborough District Council is trialling new freedom camping bylaws this summer. Freedom camping is possible in most of Port Underwood except in Ocean Bay. If there are problems with freedom camping you need to advise the District Council who can then send an officer out. The Council will not know of any problems and therefore if the bylaws need to be changed unless it is informed of them.

**Tsunami inundation – Ken Roush**

Maps have been created that show the extent of coastal inundation from two levels of tsunami. More information is to be made available. The information sessions, which would include presentations from hazard expert and members of the emergency management team, would be held on February 20 at Mariners Mall, Picton, March 3 at Market Pl, Blenheim and on March 5 at the Rarangi Community Hall. All sessions will be held from 10am to 2pm.

**Open discussion**

There was an open discussion on a number of topics.

Whataroa Forest - Gerard Malcolm offered to answer questions and give an outline of the Whataroa Forest development. Although the land is for sale in various blocks, an Indian company owns the trees. This company will be logging for the next 5 yrs. Whether the land is replanted or not is up to any new owners, but it was suggested that this may not be economically viable. The land being sold may be impacted by carbon credit issues. The land is being sold in two stages. Six plots have access by road. There is a forestry road and it may be possible to link this to the public road. The majority of the plots will only have water access. This creates the point of major interest for the Association as there will need to be consideration of the parking requirements in Oyster Bay for cars, boats and trailers – Whataroa Forest has paid a contribution to the Council in respect of this.

Roads – one of the main problems with subdivisions in general is the increased use of the roads. Having spoken to Ian Sutherland of the Council they say that the Road Transport Authority does not perceive the roads to be an issue nor a bar to development.

The council is only aware of accidents that are reported to the police, consequently, it is incumbent on us to ensure they hear of all accidents and near accidents. To this end a form has been produced to be returned to the association to record these. This is to highlight to the council the danger of the roads.

Freedom Camping – DOC does not allow camping in Hakahaka and Tom Caines bays. The Freedom camping bylaw is on trial and the Association can submit on this issue. DOC and the Council will act if they are given the rego number of offending vehicles. The Council is not interested if the camping is on DOC land.

**Any other business**

The Ophi subdivision was mentioned. It was agreed that submissions would be made to protect the historic grave sites from water, effluent and tree damage.

Trawling is mentioned in the resource plan – we need to consider if trawling and dredging is appropriate given the sites of special interest in the Port.

Fibre optic cable. There was no progress on this issue and the Government thinks that Vodaphone is covering the rural areas. The issue will be raised in newsletter to see if owners want a node in a bay and whether Chorus should be contacted.

**Election of the committee**

The new PUA committee consist of:

John Davison (Chair),Sara Roush (Secretary/Treasurer), Ken Roush, David Whyte,

David McBryde, Jeremy Ward, Michael Blaschke.