



Houghton Valley Progressive Association (HVPA) President's Report

Kia ora koutou

A small event was a bit of a revelation for me this year. We had a visit from Helen who grew up in the valley and whose dad had major involvement in the hall. At ninety-five, her memories were fading but Grant was able to share a lot of historical material and names from her past. We are lucky that we can get a sense of continuity in this community and respect the families who have connection to this place. Grant's role as kaitiaki enabled Helen to recover what being a kid in this valley meant back then.

After a year that dislocated our sense of what's normal it seemed to be back to business for the hall. We did see a drop in the numbers of family events, but Andrew, Lucy, Katy, and Jimmy kept Koha Coffee a steady presence. We have a greater variety of bookings in the hall this year including Saffron and Brian's wedding; music video rehearsals; STEM workshops for girls; life coaching; lots of yoga; pilates; well-being workshops and another successful Seeds to Feeds event. The foyer received a face lift thanks to the organisational grant from Wellington City Council; Harry water-blasted the outside of the hall; Linda Smith researched and provided prints with a local perspective; and the fence got finished thanks to the flying squad of Playcentre dads. It is interesting to connect with Duke of Edinburgh award participants like Jimmy McKirdy and Harry Cregeen and we hope it might be a regular contact.

The wider picture of our relationship with Wellington City Council is a bit hazy. On one hand we appreciate the support that an organisational grant and garden funding gives us, but the long saga of community feedback processes has almost exhausted our interest. Spatial and 10 Year Planning processes seem to create more frustration for residents' associations when there is fragmented information and little sign of influence on the outcome. Fewer than 5% of ratepayers chose to be involved and vocal lobbying seems to have more influence. We can't afford to focus only on hot issues if we are to keep our wider community engaged in longer-term projects and yet we want to be a voice for the concerns of the community. We have a formal structure which is an advantage when it comes to issues of credibility but it's not that compatible with the diversity and responsiveness of social networks. Through Jenny's work with the newsletter we try to keep connected and informative but it's fair to see this as work in progress.

The community garden group were a visible presence at the HV School fair and Miranda ran a Te Kawakawa Commons art in the garden event; Conservation Volunteers came to help, both at the Commons and in the Valley. Personally, I find the energy of any group activity makes one feel like this IS a community but some people still go on with the mahi in the shadows....Dave MacArthur and Lesley MacElwain with the hall; the gardeners; the painters; the ringawera in the kitchen and those who give time to host or attend meetings.

Several year's work by Grant, Jenny, Norman, Dave, and others is leading to a 'visioning' hui at this year's AGM and we hope to see new energy realised and new members of our community engaged. There is a pattern for many community groups where a seven-year cycle carries people and projects along until the energy wanes a bit and a new cycle is needed. I hope this next wave will carry us through to the centenary of the hall in 1929.

For those who have taken an organisational interest, my thanks for your support. Brian Fowler (Treasurer), Grant Corbishley for several years as Secretary; Christine Fowler and Dave McArthur who have long association experience, Miranda Munro, Norman Smith, and Jenny Rattenbury who have been staunch supporters of the hall committee.

Ngā mihi nui maioha

Ken Munro, President, HVPA, July 11, 2021