

Presidents Report 2015-16

presented to Glenside Progressive Association AGM Wednesday 27 July 2016

It is with great pride that I am able to relate to the meeting an overview of the activities we have undertaken on behalf of our residents and community in the past 12 months.

Traditionally a key element of our activities relate to the Council owned the Halfway House and 2015-16 was no exception. On 13 October 2015 we were finally able to see the house's wonderful development for ourselves, soon after the completion of the extensive and highly publicised repiling and Heritage based refurbishment that had taken more than 18 months, but prior to a sign-off that might see it being leased to other parties.

It was both exciting and extremely satisfying to be inside at last – with lots of ideas circulating on how the facility might be best utilized by the community and developed further in association with other users going forward. Unfortunately, that highlight was short lived as a disastrous internal flood only a few weeks later resulted in the building being completely gutted again. Now some 8 months down the track it is not yet rebuilt and apparently in hiatus, while insurance claims are resolved by the Council.

Nevertheless, we persevered with our commitment to the Glenside Show and proved yet again what amazing things our small band of dedicated volunteers can achieve. Now in its 5th year the Show was this time aided by a generous grant from Council funding with significant sponsorship from the local businesses such as Twiglands-Gardenworld, Churton Park-New World, Bayleys-Johnsonville and our long term supporters at Churton Park Store.

Held on Wellington Anniversary Day in January, this year's Glenside Show attracted over 1200 visitors and more than 100 entries across the various produce and creative categories, as well as providing a full day's family activity with a pet parade, petting zoo, pony rides, community group demonstrations, musical entertainers and of course the ever popular Wellington Boot Toss. I would like to acknowledge the commitment and effort of the Show Committee Marg Ellis, Helen Bond and Suzanne Hendry who worked with me on this project from the start. We look forward to welcoming other residents who may be wanting to join the established team and building on this effort again in 2017.

The focus for the community at the Halfway House has moved from the inside to the out. 2015 saw the formal establishment of the Halfway House Heritage Gardeners Group led by Claire Bibby with a long term vision for development and restoration of the grounds. A great deal has been achieved in a short time – not only in planning and development of mutually beneficial landscape designs but also practical work clearing and preparing ground and the initiation of the Heritage Fruit Tree Orchard which can be enjoyed by our community in only a few years, given the established nature of the trees used, as well as by generations to come.

Not all the Association's work is at this one location of course. The Glenside Restoration Group, driven in a huge part by the energies of our current Vice-President Barry Blackett have transformed Stebbings Stream from the Middleton Road bridge to the new Western Bridge on the new Westchester Link with clearing, weeding and planting activity - especially near Stebbings and Glenside Road. Their primary focus is streamside but has also resulted in some much admired informational signage at each end of the informally coined Stebbing Walkway. This is an ongoing project which the community is encouraged to join in on an almost weekly basis.

Another Association project that was really taken off over the past 12 months with strong community support is "Enhancing the HALO" underwritten by the Morgan Foundation and providing \$5,000 in credit towards traps for a pest eradication programme focusing on Possums and Rodents across the Glenside suburb. Driven largely by the efforts of Alan Brown the head count on possums stands at over 200 with similar numbers of rat catches recorded. As a result people are reporting higher yields in fruit and flowers and an explosion of birdlife in the suburb that shows a practically positive outcome. We want to see this continue. With formal commitment to the initial phase complete the HALO project is now poised to re-emerge with a new direction and bigger focus on streamside trapping along the less habituated sections of the Porirua and Stebbings Streams.

Also ongoing is the Association's commitment to Community Patrol work which reflected in the long-term participation by resident volunteers Jacqueline Bligh and Sabah Ahmad and in the financial contributions we have made to the Northern Suburbs Community Patrol group over the past year. Specifically, we sponsored decals for a recently purchased Patrol vehicle and also gave some \$300 in fuel vouchers to assist in the volunteers patrolling activity.

From within the executive we continue to work hard in representing the needs and desires of our residents in Council submissions and undertake negotiations where these will affect us. This past year GPA made submissions on the Annual Plan, Open Space Access Plan, participated in a Regional Council Bus Review and encouraged individuals to submit on the Dog Control and Animal Bylaw Policy reviews. Ongoing there are discussions opening on the longer term development of public access and walking tracks into Stebbings Valley and Marshall Ridge and we have also re-instigated talks with Councillors on solutions to providing safer access for pedestrians and recreational cyclists along Middleton Road – a project that has resulted in safer egress through the rural section of Middleton Road in the past and will hopefully be seen as the key link it is for non-motorised travel as well.

Many of the projects reported here are ongoing and have a long history. I am perhaps repeating what has gone before in previous reports.

One that has grown out of very small beginnings is the instigation of a Neighbourhood Emergency Response Plan. As a result of the work done by Andrea Wilson there is a growing pool of informational resources and neighbourly connections using street group co-ordinators, so that in the event of a major emergency we will be prepared not only individually, but as a community to help each other directly.

Recently this project was expanded into the next level and one beyond our resources alone. There is a joint development of a series of public meetings that will seek to prepare a community wide plan commencing in August. These Community Response Meetings are to be facilitated by WREMO and are being arranged in conjunction with our much bigger neighbour Churton Park. This series represents a real testing of the waters since our relationship with the Churton Park Community Association has been strained at times in the past to say the least, but I am confident that the best outcomes can be achieved for both groups by working together on something like this.

We are lucky in Glenside to have a small group of dedicated volunteers who each contribute in their own way and a pool of residents willing to offer their homes up for meetings on a regular basis. Thank you for this contribution as it would often not be possible to continue our activities without it.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the behind the scenes efforts of our outgoing Executive in particular current Secretary Margaret Ellis and current Treasurer Suzanne Hendry.

And finally I want to say a special thanks to those who maintain and develop our online presence through the website, newsletter and now social media with an enthusiasm and dedication that is often underestimated. Thank you Andrea Wilson, Claire Bibby and Rex Johnston for your largely unrecognized efforts. Glenside is often the envy of other groups as a result.

I hope to continue my involvement with the Association in other ways, if this is the wish of those present at this AGM, but after around 4 years as Secretary and then 3 years as President do feel it is the right time to step aside and hope some of our newer residents will step up and take the reins – knowing that there is a solid basis of experience and support still available if needed. The Association should continue to look forward and not back as we get ready for another exciting year.

Jan Voss

President

Glenside Progressive Association Inc

www.glenside.org.nz

