

Biodiversity Advisory Group

13 May 2024



Biodiversity Advisory Group – 13/05/24

Minutes of a meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group held on Monday 13 May 2024, in the Wakanui Room, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton, commencing at 1.00pm.

Present

Mayor Neil Brown and Councillor Richard Wilson (Acting Chair);

Alice Shanks, Adi Avnit, Edith Smith, Angela Cushnie, Brad Edwards, Kim Wall, Mike Salvesen, Val Clemens, Ian Fraser and Nikki Delaway, Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces), Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager), Bert Hofmans (Open Spaces Planner), Dr Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor).

In attendance

Andy Hirschberg (DOC) and Mary Jenkin (Governance Support).

1 Apologies

That apologies received from Crs Leen Braam and Lynette Lovett; Nick Vernon, Donna Field, Janine Holland, Barry Austin, Ian Frazer, Lisa Peer-Adams, Mary Ralston and Willie Leferink be accepted.

Wilson/Clemens

carried

2 Extraordinary Business

Nil

3 Declarations of Interest

Nil

4 Confirmation of Minutes

That the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting held on 12 February 2024 be taken as read and confirmed.

Salvesen/Edwards

carried

5 Launch of Ashburton District Biodiversity Strategy

The Group acknowledged the work that has been undertaken to develop the Strategy, noting that the next steps will be to achieve the action plan and look at how parties will work collaboratively. The implementation plan is expected to be complete by 1 July 2024.

Group members commented on the need to look at connections, so groups applying for funding for the same cause don't overlap, and for groups to work more collaboratively for the common goal. It was agreed there would be value in inviting representatives from the various stakeholder groups to speak to the Biodiversity Group about their projects and how they operate.

The Mayor took the opportunity to remind the Biodiversity Group members to submit reports to this forum with specific actions so that Council can understand and consider what is being asked for.

Christian displayed the Biodiversity Project Sites Form on the ADC web (link shown below)
[Ashburton-district/biodiversity](https://www.ashburton.govt.nz/ashburton-district/biodiversity)

Recommendation to Council

That Council invites the Upper Rangitata Gorge Landcare Group and the Methven Lions Birdsong Initiative to each nominate a representative to join the Biodiversity Advisory Group.

Wilson/Cushnie

carried

6 Indigenous Nature – Urban Centres

The Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor led discussion on how indigenous nature can be brought back into New Zealand's urban centres, and referred to Professor Bruce Clarkson's presentation to the Group in February.

Professor Clarkson shared information about buffering, beneficial restoration, and the need to have the correct species of trees for community restoration. Thought and planning about what is beneficial to the district is imperative. How can we achieve this within our Biodiversity Strategy?

Members agreed that careful consideration will be given to the planting of natives versus exotics, and to planting methodology – what plants do well in the district and if the focus should be on dryland species and planting to suit the site.

The Biodiversity Advisory Group agreed that it would be helpful to have a report from Council officers on native plants used in Council projects, and where plants are sourced.

7 Ecologist / Biodiversity Advisor's report

That the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor's report be received.

Smith/Avnit

carried

8 Group Updates

• Synlait planting programme

It was reported that Synlait are gathering seeds from forest reserves.

• Forest & Bird

Noted that Forest & Bird are also involved in trapping.

Spraying of gorse has been undertaken at Ashton Beach (cliff face terrace riser), an area of significant natural vegetation.

Forest & Bird are concerned about wildings from private shelterbelts, particularly D.fir. It was suggested that landowners be approached to discuss how this can be dealt with.

The Group agreed that the details of the upcoming wilding pine event be shared through Council's communications.

• Lake Heron

The Advisory Group heard that trapping has been successful at Lake Heron. A wasp problem on the Mt Somers walkway has also been dealt with by DOC. It was noted that wallabies and pigs have been an issue.

• Kānuka Trust

The Kānuka Mid Canterbury Regeneration Trust newsletters continue to be sent out a couple of times a year, as a snap-shot of their interactions with schools and community groups, educating about native plants and appropriate plantings for this environment.

- **Ōtūwharekai**

The DOC newsletter will be sent out every six months. Reported successful fledgling in Upper Hakatere/South Ashburton River.

- **QEII Trust**

Discussion on holly weed control - \$80,000 spent. The species was introduced in 1860 and spread by Blackbirds and Kererū. The red berry trees need to be removed and it is difficult to eradicate.

ECan will be running a workshop on 19 May at Little River – focus is on garden weeds posing a threat to biodiversity across Banks Peninsula. The Group considered whether a similar event could be held in Ashburton.

- **Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective**

MCCC now has nine catchment groups. Two new groups, Whitcombe Landcare Group (an existing group which has opted to become a member) and Mt Harding Creek are in the process of forming.

A map of the district's catchment boundaries is being finalised.

Hekeao Hinds River hapua is thriving and teeming with wildlife including recent sighting of a bittern. Regarding coordination, this is a significant component of what MCCC are doing as they develop networks across the district, in particular with Kānuka Trust as schools are introduced to the catchment conversations.

The [Biodiversity Project Site Survey app](#) web link is shared, as requested.

9 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 5 August 2024.

The Group discussed changing the dates of the remaining two meetings this year, due to the clash of meetings for Donna Field. It was agreed to bring the meetings forward a week, to be held on 5 August and 4 November 2024.

The meeting concluded at 3.39 pm.