

Biodiversity Advisory Group

8 December 2020



Biodiversity Advisory Group

Minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group held on Tuesday 8 December 2020, commencing at 1.00pm at the Council Chamber, 137 Havelock Street, Ashburton.

Present: Councillors Lynette Lovett (Chair), Bert Hofmans (ADC); Steve Fabish (GM Community Services); Val Clemens (Forest & Bird and ACCT), Jane Riach (Kānuka Trust), Edith Smith (Forest & Bird and ACCT), Jayde Couper (Fish & Game); Gen de Spa ((Foothills Landcare Group); Mike Salvesen (Federated Farmers); and Barry Austin (Mt Somers Walkway Soc. & Lake Heron Conservation Soc.); Dave Moore (Water Zone Committee).

In attendance: Carol McAtamney (Governance Support - minutes); Peter Garde and Mac McElwain (Methven Lions Club), Michael Edmondson and Nick Vernon (Synlait)

1 Apologies

Cr Diane Rawlinson, Ian Fraser, Mary Ralston, Donna Field, Marcelo Wibmer, Bill Thomas and Mike Salvesen (lateness, 1.14pm)

Clemens/ Smith

Carried

2 Extraordinary Business

District Planning Process – Ian Hyde (ADC District Planning Manager)

The current District Plan was adopted in August 2014 and a review was due to be undertaken in 2023/24.

The Government commissioned Tony Randerson to undertake an assessment and appraisal of the current Resource Management Act and its recommendations are currently being reviewed by the Government. It is expected that the Government will be aggressive in implementing new legislation which will have a greater acknowledgement for biodiversity and environmental awareness. The impact means that the timeline for the anticipated review of the ADC district plan, previously expected to start in 2023/24, is uncertain at this point.

3 Declarations of Interest

Nil

4 Confirmation of Minutes – 6/10/20

That the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting held on 6 October 2020 be taken as read and confirmed.

Smith/Riach

Carried

5 Reports and Presentations

5.1 Native Tree Planting (Methven Lions) – Peter Garde and Mack McElwain presented:

- Currently undertaking a project to create a walking/cycling loop around the Methven township with a surface that people from all walks of life regardless of age and ability can use at any time.
- Have received approximately 1,000 grasses from Ecan to plant at Mt Harding Creek to help improve fish life and the health of the creek.
- RDR have assisted with gates, bollards and cattle-stops etc along the RDR.
- Methven Community Board had contributed with funding towards building structures.
- Are currently in need of materials, native grasses and shrubs and working bees and asked for suggestions from the group as to who they could approach for assistance.
- Synlait representatives advised that as part of their 'Environmental Initiatives' programme they will have approximately 80,000 plants available for planting in 2021 and would be willing to undertake discussions with Methven Lions.
- Forest and Bird offered to provide assistance/guidance as to what species would be best suited to planting in the area.

5.3 Synlait Environmental Initiatives – Michael Edmondson and Nick Vernon presented:

Four key components:

Lead with Pride

- Launched 2013.
- Based on standards covering broad range farming practices and maintains a focus on care of the Environment, Animals, Food safety and the people who work on and manage farms.

Whakapuāwai

- Launched 2019.
- Synlait's commitment to restoring and regenerating native ecosystems, waterways and wetlands, flora and fauna – benefiting Mahinga Kai values.
- 80,000 trees to be planted on farms next year, this number is likely to increase over time.
- Synlait offered all staff one day a year to plant trees on farms.
- 15 ha of grazing land behind the Dunsandel factory will be planted in native trees and shrubs in a development to include walking tracks and wetlands.

Soil Health Partnership

- Partnered with AgResearch to assess soil health across Synlait's pastoral dairy farms, to understand how it can be improved over time.
- Aim is to confirm the link between soil health and farm profitability.

Greenhouse Gas Management (GHG)

- Since 2017 Synlait has been reporting GHG emissions for each farm (through Overseer) and educating farm suppliers on farm specific sources of GHG's

6 General Matters

Insurance Reserves – Bert Hofmans (ADC Open Spaces Planner)

- A report was commissioned from Mike Harding – Ecologist to survey roadsides to identify sites that insurance reserves could be located.

- Five sites were recommended – Ashton Beach - site 1684, Moorehouse Road (west of Mayfield) – site 404, Harris Reserve – site 294, Plantation Road – site 363 and Ferrimans Road – site 281.
- Sites are deteriorating or disappearing due to irrigation, accidental spraying, fencing, stock movement etc.
- Roadside vegetation is more vulnerable than when it is a fenced area. It was suggested that areas that are semi-controlled would be more suitable.
- A request is to be made that an area in the Domain be made available for the establishment of an Insurance Reserve – Bert to follow up.

ADC Biodiversity Officer Role

- A submission is to be prepared by the Advisory Group to the LTP supporting the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer including suggestions of specifics that the role should entail.
- It was also recommended that each of the Advisory Group members prepare individual submissions from their organisation.

7 Agency Updates

Kānuka Trust

- Kānuka Balancing Biodiversity, Beneficial Bugs Field Day
 - 29 Attendees
 - Fascinating insights from:
 - Crop & Food - which natives attract which beneficials
 - FAR – monitoring the effect of beneficials and adapting farming practice as a result.
 - Stephen Brailsford - practical planting advice for success, right plant right place, ground preparation, plant protectors and maintenance. Farmers - using native plantings as farm assets.
- Participated in the Ashton Beach planting day.
- Have employed an educator who will work with schools in 2021.

Ashburton District Council

Lake Camp

- Another round of weed control undertaken at Lake Camp by contractor 20 November.
- Planting areas mulched and fenced 20 November 2020.
- Another round of pest control undertaken 15 October 2020– 3 possums, 8 hares and 27 rabbits.
- Pest trees removed from reserve area located between bach areas at Lake Clearwater.

Ashton Beach

- Weed control work undertaken 26 November on biodiversity site by contractors.
- Consultant has been engaged to prepare Lizard Management Plan and Wildlife Permit application.

Wakanui Beach Restoration project

- Volunteer weeding ½ day on 8 Dec 2020.
- Weed spraying to occur before Xmas.
- Another round of weeding undertaken 8 Dec with members of the group.

Barry Austin, Lake Heron Conservation

- Replacing single traps with double traps.
- Had enlarged the hole on the bigger traps to enable the capture of cats which was very successful. Due to change in policy large hole entry traps can no longer be used on DOC land. Traps are being returned to standard size.
- Wasp control on private land around Staveley area has commenced.

Gen de Spa, Foothills Landcare Group

- Two species of native mistletoe have been discovered in the Staveley forest.
- Wasp control has commenced.
- Local and Christchurch school children have been undertaking weed control in the forest.
- A request has been received for trapping to be undertaken on the Methven bicycle route.

Val Clemens, ACCT

- Craspedia - Landcare are continuing to undertake DNA testing on plants at Wakanui to see if they have been pollenated.
- Tests are also being carried out using frozen pollen transported to Wakanui from Lincoln.

Mike Salvesen, Federated Farmers

- Members of the Ecan Biosecurity group recently undertook a field trip to the Herbarium located in Lincoln.

Jayde Couper, Fish & Game

- Electric fishing has been undertaken on Lake Hood.
- Juvenile brown trout were found above a culvert with a number of natives species found below the culvert

Dave Moore – Zone Committee

- Committee members, John Waugh and Karl Russell, tendered their resignations effective 24 November 2020.
- Currently working with Ecan, ADC and Runanga to establish an action plan/priorities for the next two years.
- A workshop was held regarding the next steps for the Ashburton River and tributaries including Carters Creek, Ashburton Lakes, Wakanui lagoon and the possibility of getting water returning to Wakanui Creek.

Edith Smith, Forest and Bird

- Participated in the annual bird survey for the Ashburton River.
- Recently walked along the Ashburton River (Valetta bridge to the river mouth). Very disappointed in the state of the river – the amount of slime and large stones was disturbing, walking through lupin, viewed over 5,000 black-backed gulls over a long stretch of the river.
- Black fronted terns nesting just before Walkhams Road.

Dryland Biodiversity - Field Trip

A field trip to see the significant progress being made in regard to dryland biodiversity is to be scheduled, areas to visit to include:

- Plantation Road
- Harris Reserve

- Swamp Road
- Ferrimans Road
- Ocean Farm
- Carrs Farm
- Ashton Beach
- Carters Creek

The Chair requested written reports for agency updates to be sent in advance of agendas going out.

8 Next Meeting

Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 1.00pm

2021 Dates:

Tuesday 6 April

Tuesday 8 June

Tuesday 3 August

Tuesday 2 November

9 Terms of Reference

A copy of the updated terms of reference were circulated with the agenda.

The meeting concluded at 2.50pm