

## Biodiversity Advisory Group

3 February 2025



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### *Biodiversity Advisory Group Minutes – 3/02/25*

Minutes of a meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group held on Monday 3 February 2025, in the Wakanui Room, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton, commencing at 1.00pm.

#### **Present**

Mayor Neil Brown; Councillors Leen Braam (Chair), Lynette Lovett and Richard Wilson; Adi Avnit, Donna Field, Edith Smith, Val Clemens, Ian Fraser, Kim Wall, Angela Cushnie, Sarah Mason, Mike Salvesen, Barry Austin, Robb Stevens, Cain Duncan, Barry Maister & Mac McElwain.

#### **In attendance**

Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces), Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager), Dr Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor), Lucy Brown (Governance Support) and Linda Clarke (Communications Advisor)

#### **1 Apologies**

For absence: Sally Stevens, Tom Munro, Willy Leferink, Gen de Spa & Alice Shanks.

#### **2 Extraordinary Business**

Nil.

#### **3 Declarations of Interest**

Nil.

#### **4 Confirmation of Minutes**

**That** the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting held on 4 November 2024 be taken as read and confirmed.

Austin/ Wilson

Carried

### **Presentation**

#### **Whakamana te Waituna Trust**

The Chair welcomed Cain Duncan and Robb Stevens from Fonterra.

Cain and Robb reported on Southland's Wakamana te Waituna Trust, set up in 2018 to co-ordinate activities involved with restoring the mana of the Waituna lagoon and catchment. Fonterra is involved with this Living Water programme along with Te Runanga o Awarua/Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu, Department of Conservation, Environment Southland and Southland DC.

Funding from the Freshwater Improvement Fund (\$13.3m committed over five years) is being used to ensure the long-term resilience of the Waituna community, catchment and lagoon.

Cain and Robb were thanked for the presentation.

Cain left the meeting at 1.30pm (and will email a copy of his presentation to Christian)

Following the presentation, the Group briefly discussed whether there would be opportunity in the Ashburton district for a similar project and how that would be funded.

## 5 Implication of cats on native biodiversity

Barry Maister & Mac McEwain presented the report seeking Council's consideration of introducing a cat management policy. The Birdsong Initiative Trust wants to see the numbers of feral and stray cats reduced and is suggesting a policy that mandates the desexing and chipping of domestic cats would help reduce the impact.

The group have approached SPCA to initiate a programme with subsidies and general promotion. Local vets are on board, however are looking for further guidance in this area. Discussion followed around the differentiation between companion and strays and the importance of desexing.

The Group asked for information to be requested from other councils, where similar policies have been implemented, as to their effectiveness.

### Recommendation to Council

**That** the Biodiversity Advisory Group recommends that Council investigates a formal cat management policy.

Avnit/Field

Carried

Donna Field, Barry Maister & Mac McEwain left the meeting at 2pm.

## 6 Ecologist / Biodiversity Advisor's Report

### • Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy Revitalisation

Christian reported on the new Steering Group set up by ECan and managed by Boffa Miskell. It is proposed that ADC will be represented by Crs Braam and Wilson at future meetings, along with Council's Biodiversity Officer and Policy Advisor.

### • Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy

Council will hold public and stakeholder workshops on Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 February. Registration is online via [itsourplace.nz](https://itsourplace.nz)

### • Biodiversity Grant Application Round

Council is calling for 2025 biodiversity grant applications. Applications are open until Friday 28 February 2025.

### • Future Consultation with Biodiversity Inputs

MPI are inviting submissions on the 'Partnering to plant trees on Crown-owned land' proposal. Individual stakeholders and groups with potential projects within the affected Crown lands may find this of interest. Submissions close on Friday 28 February.

### • Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024 Implementation

Further to Christian's report [DOC's risk assessment](#) is to be released today.

### • Plantation Road Project

Val and Edith will meet with Christian to discuss this further and report back to the group.

**That** the Biodiversity Advisory Group receives the report from the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor.

Lovett/Wilson

Carried

## **7 Group activity updates**

The Chair invited each of the Group representatives to give a brief update on their activities.

### **Lake Heron Conservation Society & Mt Somers Walkway Society**

- Update on recent weed control, pest control and visitor activity.

### **Forest & Bird**

- Overview of Forest & Bird's annual lake and river bird surveys, trapping programmes and wilding / tussock projects.

### **Department of Conservation**

- Update on the continuation of DOC work programmes specifically with pest control programmes for possums, pig, tahr and mice and noting identification of a new lizard species in the lakes district and the white bellied skink project.

### **Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective**

- Angela Cushnie acknowledged the recent passing of Ashburton Forks Catchment Group Chairperson Chris Allen.

### **Stockwater Transition Plan**

- Cr Wilson requested that stakeholders register for updates on the proposed race closures via the ADC [website](#).

### **Federated Farmers**

- Commented on the environmental impacts of pine trees plantings.

### **Synlait**

- Update on recent activities including Synlait's seed workshops and next generation farming, RDR Methven/Methven walkway and A2 initiatives.

### **Kanuka Trust**

- Update on recent activity and operational focus for the school year, including working alongside The Methven Birdsong Initiative.

### **Fonterra**

- Further commented on the Wakamana te Waituna presentation and Fonterra's future partnership opportunities with Landcare Trust.

### **Ashburton Water Zone Committee**

- Update on the remodelling of the Ashburton Water Zone Committee with an alternative model likely to be confirmed May.

## **8 Next Meeting**

The Biodiversity Advisory Group will have a field trip on Monday 5 May, departing the Te Whare Whakatere, Council office, 2 Baring Square East at 1pm. Further details will be advised.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 4 August, commencing 1pm in the Wakanui Room.

The meeting concluded at 3pm.