

Biodiversity Advisory Group

12 February 2024



Biodiversity Advisory Group – 12/02/24

Minutes of a meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group held on Monday 12 February, in Hine Paaka Council Chamber, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton, commencing at 1.00pm.

Present

Mayor Neil Brown and Councillors Leen Braam (Chair) Lynette Lovett and Richard Wilson;
Alice Shanks, Adi Avnit, Edith Smith, Angela Cushnie, Barry Austin, Lisa Peers-Adams, Kim Wall, Mike Salvesen, Val Clemens, Jan Kirini and Ian Fraser.

Matt McElwain (Methven Lions Birdsong Initiative) was also present.

In attendance

Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager), Dr Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor) and Mary Jenkin (Governance Support).

1 Apologies

That apologies received from Janine Holland, Donna Field, Nick Vernon, Willy Leferink and Mary Ralston be accepted.

Wilson/Lovett

Carried

2 Extraordinary Business

Nil

3 Declarations of Interest

Nil

4 Previous Minutes

That the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting held on 13 November 2023 be taken as read and confirmed.

Austin/ Avnit

Carried

Presentation

Professor Bruce Clarkson, University of Waikato (via MS Teams) – 1.05 pm-1.48 pm

5 Bringing Indigenous Nature back into NZ urban centres

Professor Bruce Clarkson was welcomed to the meeting and invited to present his report.

The presentation was a summary of urban/peri-urban interactions and ecological restoration, looking at expanding and connecting, and reconstructing urban areas.

At the conclusion of the presentation members took the opportunity to ask questions.

Prof Clarkson cautioned about planting invasive trees and the need to consider if the original inhabitants (plants and animals) have been catered for. He said there has to be a re-balancing of landscapes.

A copy of Prof Clarkson's presentation will be circulated and members may also refer to the website [peoplecitiesnature](https://peoplecitiesnature.org/)

The Open Spaces Manager left the meeting at 1.48pm.

6 District Planning Manager

Ian Hyde provided an overview of RMA and District Plan provisions. This included an explanation of Rural C Zone Rules and the National Environmental Standards (NES) for Plantation Forestry which discusses wilding management and issues associated with historical planting when there were no controls or consents.

Barry Austin commented on the amount of weed control that's been undertaken by the Lake Heron Conservation Society. With a change of land ownership, it's understood that pines will be planted for carbon credits.

Pest management is also an issue and concern was expressed about reduced DOC funding.

It was agreed that solutions need to be found and worked towards.

7 Ecologist / Biodiversity Advisor's report

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

Smith/ Austin

Carried

8 Group Updates

- **Chertsey tussocks**

Edith asked if Council could carry on the work that she initiated with this significant natural area. Christian will investigate this and report back.

- **Staveley Camp and remnant native forest**

Last weekend's weed wrangling and well-being day was successful. The Trap Library is working well and members are assisting to train people to help with monitoring.

The wasp problem needs to be put into a pest management plan – noting that 65 nests have been dealt within a 10 hectare section.

- **Awa Awa Rata**

It was reported that plantings are doing well – as are the weeds.

- **Lake Heron Conservation Society**

Barry Austin reported that DOC found only four wasp nests on the tracks and they have been dealt with. Lake Heron trapping programmes continue. A number of pests have been cleared – mainly hedgehogs and a large number of stoats, but no possums.

Barry confirmed that the Walkway Society maintains Sharplin Falls and noted that some steps need remedial work.

- **Forest and Bird**

Val Clemens congratulated the Council for the biodiversity at Te Whare Whakitere and for naming Hine Paaka Council Chamber after a woman and a tree. Congratulations also on the new restrooms and viewing platform at Rakaia Gorge. The Mayor thanked Val for her comments which will be passed onto staff.

Forest & Bird are continuing to experiment with wool weed map around the rare plants at Harris Reserve. The second enclosure has been completed.

9 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 13 May 2024

The meeting concluded at 2.56 pm.