**Minutes of 33rd Russell Protection Society AGM**

**5pm Friday 4th January 2019 at Christ Church Hall**

**1. Present:** Bob Drey, Mark de Courcy, Margot Forrest, Maggie Sales, Kiki Nicolson, Ines Piroth, John Maxwell, Christine Aronson, Rebecca Watson, Margot Arensel (sp?), Kathy (?), Terry Ross, Don Lion (?), Rob Magnusson (sp), Libby (?), John Harvey, Frear Wilcox (sp), John Denmen (sp)

**?Apologies:** Jerry & Joseph Koch, Lindesay Family, K de Courcy

**2. Guest Speakers-John Maxwell, Malcolm McAll, Sandy Myre, & Alistair MacDuff**: Russell Recyclers has been renamed “Resilient Russell Chartable Trust”. The group has been going for 5 years now and has expanded its brief to include waste minimisation, recycling, climate change, water pollution, sustainability and future proofing of Russell. The Trust participates in a number of local events and contracts to collect and recycle rubbish at these, while spreading the message of minimising and recycling waste, They have started a composting project and are offering worm farm extract to gardeners. Another popular initiative is to have annual “Green” awards for individuals and groups that demonstrate good green initiatives. Fundraising is an ongoing task and helps support publicity about the Group’s work and the messages it wants to deliver. It was explained that the Russell Landfill is the responsibility of Far North District Council an,d any concerns about it should be addressed to the Council. Group is looking at alternatives to plastics, including a starch-based material that readily decomposes. The guest speakers were thanked for a stimulating presentation and were presented with a kete containing bottles of wine.

**3. Previous minutes:** The minutes of the 2018 AGM were unanimously confirmed (Mark/Terry Ross)

**4. Matters arising**: None

**5. Wharf Report – Letter from Doug Owens:** A letter from Committee member Doug Owens was circulated a the meeting in order to determine whether the Society should endorse it. The letter summaries events leading up to the redevelopment of the Russell Wharf and the proposed setting up of a Wharf Trust. He then poses a series of questions to our Community Board representative. It is questioned why the number of public berths has been reduced from 5 to one. Concern is raised over the Resource Consent Application for redeveloping the Wharf not being publicly notified. The negotiations between the existing Trust and Far North Holdings was held behind closed doors. Copies of ageeements and deeds were not forthcoming. The likelihood of the Wharf being further privatised to the detriment of the local community and groups such as the Russell Boating Club and the Bay of Islands Swordfish Club was raised. The construction of a new $500k coffee shop/restaurant on the Wharf was queried and details of any contract or financial arrangement in this regard was sought. Issues relating to the provision of water and sewerage on the Wharf were also challenged. The meeting decided to endorse the letter, with the exception of demanding private financial information that could involve commercial confidentiality. This reservation, however, did extend to Far North Holdings, a public entity, and their decision to spend $500k of taxpayer’s money.

**6. Proposed Museum Redevelopment – Update:** The RPS Committee was concenred about the lack of public consultation over the plans for the Museum. These plans have evolved and have addressed some of the Society’s concerns, however the process that has been followed was tightly controlled and ruled out either a public meeting or public notification of the Resource Consent Application. Members of our Society are encouraged to seek out the latest plans and provide feedback directly to the Museum Trustees. The view of the proposed building from York Street is still a concern. The ultimate cost of the redevelopment is still unclear and this could result in a heavy financial burden on future Museum operations.

**7. Russell Plan – Lack of Progress:** Members of our Committee have invested a considerable amount of time and energy in producing the latest draft of the Russell Plan. A consultation strategy was prepared and the first stages of public signboards and questionnaires implemented. Unfortunately our Community Board representative backed out of the process after complaints were made to him. At present Janet Planet has undertaken to summarise the results of the questionnaire. The meeting expressed the strong view that Russell needs a plan and that the process should be allowed to continue. Bob is to approach Janet to determine where things are at.

**8. Russell Sewerage – Lack of Reporting:** The meeting resolved (Bob/Kiki) to approach the Far North District Council to enquire where the promised 6 monthly reports and copies of thev required monitoring programme are.

**9. Resource Consent Applications – Lack of Public Notifications:** While the FNDC (and not NRC) has offered to forward Resource Management Act (RMA) applications to the Society for comment, this does not convey a statutory right to be heard or to appeal Council decisions. This stance, in part, reflects changes made to the RMA by the previous National Government that severely limited rights of participation in the process. Apparently Minister for the Environment, David Parker, has requested information about where there may be problems with lack of public engagement. It was suggested that we should canvass and involve other groups and individuals in helping to alert the Government regarding present shortcomings with the RMA. The Four Square Supermarket has received consent for a design that should improve the appearance of the building and offer more product range for the Russell Community. It is noted that the building has been future proofed by lifting it up 1.5 metres to address global warming induced sea level rise. However, adequate parking remains an issue.

**RPS Website – Progress Report:** The Committee wants to polish the site before it is put online. This included digitising various reports, including the Russell Handbook, and finalising the layout and accompanying photographs. Membership forms and contact information will also be available on the website.

**6. Treasurer’s report- Accepted:** (Maggie/Kiki)

**7. Chairperson’s report:** Refer to separate report for details.

**8. Subscriptions:** Remain the same at $25 for a single and $30 for a family (2) (Mark/Kiki)

**9. Election of officers:** Bob, Mark, Kiki, Maggie, Brad, Cris & Doug (Unanimous). Secretary position to be shared among members. Mark to retain Treasurers role.

**10. General business – Donation to Resilient Russell:** It was agreed (Bob/Terry Ross) to donate $300 to Resilient Russell in support of the great work that they are doing.

**-Archives of RPS Material:** The Committee is to discuss passing on archieved RPS material to Auckland Library for storage and possible digitising of historical documents (Kiki/Cris)

**Meeting closed at 6:40pm**