

Glenside Progressive Association Inc President's Report, (2011-12)

This is my first year as President of the Glenside Progressive Association Inc. My family first arrived in Glenside in 1999 and I have been involved with the Association for some time now, but filling the very capable shoes of our previous President Claire Bibby has been somewhat daunting.

The highlight of the past year for me has to be the inaugural Glenside Agricultural + Pastoral Show held in the grounds of the Halfway House on Wellington Anniversary Day in January 2012. The Glenside A+P Show grew very rapidly from just a few "little ideas" for a local event with the old-fashioned flavour of a country show.

I enjoyed working with the enthusiasm and drive of our ongoing Vice-President Donna Sherlock as we got the project started. I would like to thank the other families who pitched in and helped pull it off on the day - the Lockwood's, Johnson's and members of our GPA executive. I would especially like to thank our local businesses - Twiglands Gardenworld, Thyme Café, the Churton Park Dairy and Johnsonville Vetcare for so generously providing prizes and our judges Mayor Celia Wade-Brown, Cr Ngaire Best, Veterinarian Dr Michael Benfell and Chef Andrew Leota for giving their time and expertise to the proceedings.

We were blessed with good, if blustery, weather and a great turnout from both the local community and friends from suburbs. We aimed to keep things for the Inaugural Show small scale. The event's success leads me to believe that the Show day will grow and become a high point in the Glenside calendar for many years to come.

The Show day also highlighted the precarious state of the Halfway House and rekindled interest amongst those attending to see it saved and restored. This year, after so long, it was exciting to hear that Wellington City Council Parks and Reserves are finally commencing restoration and maintenance work. We now have the prospect that this iconic heritage property will indeed become the community asset the Association has long pushed for.

There are a number of behind the scenes groups and meetings that have occurred over the past twelve months related to Association business. I regularly attend the Northern Suburbs Community Groups meeting at the Johnsonville Community Centre which opens up valuable contacts and keeps us informed on others groups' activities.

There is also the Westchester Link Community Liaison Group which meets regularly with road builders Fulton Hogan to air community concerns and develop progress updates. I would like to thank Mike Bell in his absence. Mike chaired this group and did much of the work until his and his family's departure from Glenside to return to the UK in March 2012. I'm sure that other residents are as keen as I am to see the completion of the road – currently scheduled for November 2012. Then we can look forward to the next stage – the potential re-vegetation and restoration of the stream banks when, (and hopefully not if,) the Council comes through on the promises made in the Appeal process in 2010. I will continue to engage with the Council – both Councillors and Officers – on behalf of the Association to ensure that this becomes a reality, not just a promise.

In recent months the work of the Association has largely been in preparing submissions and providing input to both City and Regional Councils on the Long Term Community Plan (LTCP), Regional Bus Review and now the “Super-City” proposals. My thanks go to Barry Blackett for keeping up- to-date with submission needs and ensuring that the Association’s voice is heard when my work commitments take priority.

Despite representing one of the smaller Associations in the Wellington Region it is satisfying to find occasionally that our opinions do count as we enjoy a strong relationship with local Councillors and some Officers. We have potentially more influence than we might first think. The Wellington Bus Review generated over 6,000 submissions, mostly criticising the proposal, of which we were one. Earlier in July, the Wellington Regional Council convened a meeting for Northern suburbs community groups about the proposals. In that meeting, we were presented with very different options from the original. Barry and I were both pleased to see our key concerns and several of the ideas that the Association had put forward in our submission accommodated in the new proposed plans.

One of the Association’s strengths has long been the community newsletter. This is actively sought after by several people outside Glenside. I would like to thank Donna Sherlock for doing a great job on this and maintaining high standards in content and execution. The frequency of the newsletter is in part enabled by sponsorship to cover printing costs. My thanks are extended to Officemax, ReMax Leaders (through Geoff Warren) and Tommy’s Real Estate (through Barry Ellis) for helping us with this over the past year.

Looking forward we will be starting to prepare for the 2013 Glenside A+P Show soon so that a grant application can be made in October to make it a little bigger and brighter than this past year – but without losing the community character we gained in our first attempt. Volunteers to help with planning and development will be greatly appreciated as many hands make light work.

In the meantime, Wellington City Council officers have indicated that a community effort to “bash” a track around the Piebald Cutting could lead to the development of a safer path for pedestrians on Middleton Road and potentially create another site for streamside planting in the future. I hope you will spread the word and join me and my family on Saturday, 4th August from 1pm for the first effort on this project.

We are also expecting more input will be requested about the Bus Route Review, including some possible changes to fare structures and subsidisation in September.

Finally I wish to thank all those residents who generously offer their houses, their time and their input for Association activities. I feel privileged to live in such a great little community and can only hope to help it grow closer and more neighbourly as my role continues.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. B. W.', located at the bottom left of the page.