

MINUTES

THE ROSS LOCAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE READING ROOM, ROSS, ON TUESDAY 2nd May 2023, COMMENCING AT 11.15am.

1 PRESENT

Arthur Thorpe (Chairperson), Helen Davies, Michael Smith, Sally Langridge, Jill Bennett, Ann Thorpe (Hon Secretary).

2 IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Alison Andrews AM, Councillor Richard Archer, Councillor Andrew McCullagh (11.20am), Julie Smith, Scott Bennett.

3 APOLOGIES

Mayor Mary Knowles OAM, Christine Robinson, Marcus Rodrigues.

4 DECLARATION OF ANY PECUNIARY INTEREST BY A MEMBER OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

In accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Part 5, S48A – S56, a member of a Special Committee must not participate in any discussion or vote on any matter in respect to which the member:

- a) has an interest; or
- b) is aware or ought to be aware that a close associate has an interest.

A member has an interest in a matter if the matter was decided in a particular manner, receive or have an expectation of receiving or likely to receive a pecuniary benefit or pecuniary detriment.

It should be noted that any person declaring an interest is required to notify the General Manager, in writing, of the details of any interest declared within 7 days of the declaration.

Nil Declared

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

*That the minutes of the meeting of the Ross Local District Committee held on **Tuesday 4th April, 2023** be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.*

Michael Smith / Helen Davies

6 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 Weather Damage to Ross Reading Room

The cornerstones and the bottom course of sandstone bricks at the entrance of the reading room are weathering away and in need of attention.

It was noted that a new drain has been dug between the footpath and the stone, however the services of a specialist stonemason is required to remediate the wear and tear.

Although this matter has yet to be completed, it was decided to remove the item from the agenda.

6.2 Damaged Wall South End Of Church Street & Damaged Sandstone Kerbing.

Wall at the top (south end) of Church Street has top stones missing and looks very disordered. Customer request 61699 has been raised requesting rectification. The wall has now been repaired and the item will be removed from the agenda.

A very small section of kerbing in the centre car parking area opposite the Town Hall has been damaged by a truck, and needs to be repaired. This has been partially repaired, however council is awaiting the further supply of suitable sandstone blocks.

Although the kerbing is yet to be completely repaired it was decided to also remove this item from the agenda.

6.3 Closure Of High Street Pedestrian Rail Crossing

Ross residents are hoping to keep this crossing open. Chair has been advised that NMC will be conducting a cost and feasibility study, for a legally compliant pedestrian rail crossing linking the two sides of High Street. Once the report has been prepared it will be submitted to Council for consideration.

Works Manager has progressed this matter and NMC recently met with State Rail who have advised what is required to form a legally compliant pedestrian crossing. These requirements will be incorporated into the cost and feasibility study being prepared by NMC.

NMC is awaiting outcome of further discussions with TasRail. This item was placed on the RLDC budget priority list, and has been raised with NMC Councillors during their village tour of the 19th April.

No further information at this point in time.

Matter ongoing.

6.4 Ross Village Green – Entry Of Dogs On Leash

Council has been asked to consider revisiting the Village Green signage to include advising the public that there is an off-lead dog exercise area available at the Ross Recreation Ground, and also to indicate that there is a uni-sex disabled toilet and barbecues available within the Green.

The Doggy bag dispenser has been removed from the front fence and repositioned inside the Village Green. Council's Works Manager has expressed the view that Council do not wish to proliferate signage at the Ross Village Green and the request for a sign indicating a public toilet

was declined. As there is only one toilet in the Village Green primarily intended for the use of visitors to the Village Green, there was concern it would be over used by bus operators, instead of the Public Toilets near the Town Hall.

The request for BBQ and Off Leash Dog Park signs will be revisited sometime in the future, with perhaps Q code signs being utilised to some degree?

Matter ongoing.

6.5 Painting Of Town Hall Entrance Foyer

Painting of Town Hall foyer and rear toilets has now been completed.

NMC (M Bricknell) advised the old Council Chambers used by the Church Group has been measured and they are awaiting laying upon choice of carpet, etc.

New carpet has been laid and a thank you has been forwarded by the Church Group to NMC and the RLDC for their assistance with this issue. It has made the room much more comfortable for attendees.

Remove from agenda.

6.6 Maintenance Of Ross Footpaths

Several gravel footpaths around Ross need remediation; photos have been sent to Council, and Customer Request 78015 has been raised.

Council has replied –

“Unfortunately, due to the recent weather events this has disrupted multiple works throughout the municipality. Our priority atm is for roads to be repaired, but we do acknowledge your request and will have them addressed as soon as practicable.”

Attendees discussed and agreed that the path from the Town Hall to the female factory is the most important one and should be repaired as a matter of priority.

No action carried out as yet, and concern was raised about the winter weather exacerbating the issue. Discussed with attending Councillors and they will raise this on the committee’s behalf with NMC.

Matter ongoing.

6.7 Budget Request List

The RLDC has submitted the 2023/2024 Capital Budget request list to Council.

Councillor Bus Tour was held on 19th April, and Councillors were given further information by attending RLDC committee members (CR/HD/AT), as required.

Now awaiting decision from Council as to which items will be funded in the 2023/2024 financial year. Chairperson mentioned that it’s understood that all items requested are not

always approved due to limitation of funding.

Michael Smith requested if Ross Community Sports Club can be copied in on all correspondence to do with the sports ground between NMC and outside parties. rcsc7209@gmail.com

Water trough in the off leash dog area still not completed, although the item has been purchased. Chair to follow up.

6.8 Pedestrian Railway Crossing Chicane Portugal Street

Pedestrian Railway crossing at Portugal St, appears to have one complete chicane barrier removed and not replaced when recent maintenance work was completed on the eastern (cemetery) side of the rail line. It was also mentioned that the yellow vinyl tiles on the western side of the rail crossing are lifting badly and are a safety risk to the public.

Council has been advised of the above situation, and has been asked to contact TasRail and request that the chicane be replaced and the dangerous tiles be removed or replaced.

Matter raised again with NMC who advised that TasRail have not replied to Councils request to reinstate the chicane. Works Manager is currently following up this item.

Matter ongoing.

6.9 Council Review Of MOU

The RLDC provided feedback to Council in regards to the above. It was suggested that Council include in the new MOU under section 2, the statement made by the Mayor in the Northern Midlands Courier namely: -

“Local District Committees and Forums do not deal with complaints. Complaints should be directed to Council.”

Chair expressed the view that inclusion of this statement would provide LDC’s and Forums with a clearer and more simplified mechanism for dealing with questions raised at meetings which do not fall within the purview of LDC’s and Forums. RLDC also raised an issue with the minimum number of attendees at meetings and the wording of “strategy” and what this actually meant.

Awaiting further communication from Council in regards to the matters raised above.

Matter ongoing.

7 NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Notice Of Motion: Review Of Local District Committee Structure

Councillor Paul Terrett has lodged the following motion to be considered at Council’s 26th April 2023 meeting.

The motion reads:-

“That a report be prepared for Council reviewing the structure of the District Committees to provide greater community participation. This report should include, but not limited to, their role and function, membership, meeting times, funding and communication with the local community.”

Discussion was held regarding the implications of this motion, particularly regarding the fact that membership of all District Committees finishes at the 30 June 2023, and that applications for appointment to the new committees are usually required back to Council by mid-June. The general consensus was that the review is a good thing, it was just the timing.

Chair stated that he entirely supported a review of how the Local District Committees (LDCs) are structured, and how they operate, and would be happy to participate in the review in any manner that Council sees fit. However, he had concerns about the timetable that would be associated with such a review.

Chair mentioned that the term of the current LDCs expires on June 30th 2023, and applications for appointment to the LDCs are usually sent out to current incumbents in the middle of May which is in two weeks' time, thus providing a very short time period for any meaningful review to be conducted before applications are invited. Also of concern was that current incumbents and prospective new applicants for LDC committee membership, will be invited to apply for membership before the review will be completed. This may result further down the track once the review is completed, that Volunteers who applied according to their current understanding of the role, may find they are unable to meet any new criteria/restrictions when they come into effect and therefore may resign, leaving committees with a deficit of members and unable to meet quorum numbers.

Chair suggested that Council give consideration to extending the terms of appointment of all current LDC and Forum members until the review is complete, any changes have been agreed to and put into place, and the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) under which LDCs and Forums operate is updated, to incorporate any changes to their role and function, membership, meeting times, funding and communication with the local community.

Chair pointed out that there was already a precedent set for extending the terms of appointment of current LDCs and Forums, as evidenced by Council extending the appointment terms of all LDCs and Forums in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was also pointed out that by completing the review first, then amending the MOU to reflect any changes, there would be a greater possibility of attracting more candidates with a wider variety of backgrounds.

7.2 Round Table Discussion

Jill Bennett

- Chemical drum cage at the Campbell Town Tip is always full, and people are asked to just “drop the drums beside”. Is there a timetable for the cage to be emptied? This is a safety issue, even though drums have to be washed before dropping off at the tip. Councillors offered to take this issue back to NMC.

Arthur Thorpe

- Candy Hurren has submitted her resignation from the RLDC. The Chair and committee members wish to place on record, our thanks to Candy for all the work she has done both on the committee and is continuing to do in the community through other endeavours. Chair will purchase a card and record the Committees thanks.
- Raised the issue of the edging stones on the seating adjacent to the Band Rotunda in the Village Green falling off. Has taken photos and has forwarded them to Council's Works Manager for action.

Cr Archer

- Raised the issue of amalgamation of councils and review "Reform of Councils". NMC are looking for comments from people and committees on how this should be progressed.
- Attended the Dawn Service at Ross and the breakfast at the Man-O-Ross Hotel and they are to be commended for organising the meal.

Cr McCullagh

- Thanked committee for the invitation to attend.
- Mentioned that in regard to signage, Q codes are more discreet and amenable, cost effective and information contained in them can be updated easily. Also user friendly. Something for the committee to consider in the future.

Helen Davies

- Has contacted the Uniting Church regarding the fence/gate issue mentioned previously. No reply received as yet. Unlikely to carry out any work given it is for sale. Discussion held regarding the sale of the church and its implication on the community.
- Stone Fence near the caravan park needs repair – Helen to send photos to Chair who will follow up.
- Discussed with Works Manager, signs near the Heritage Walk, however it was decided no further action as they will go underwater in a flood.
- Paint coming off the walls in the Town Hall where covid signs have been removed in the Town Hall – just needs a "dab". Chair/Helen will discuss with Works Manager.

Michael Smith

- Has been opening the Community Library on a Saturday, however the signage on the Church Street Entry Doors to the Reading Room are very tatty. Can we please replace with neater ones? Chair to look at and action.
- Where roads have been resealed in the village, could resident's driveways be given a slight edging to stop the actual road service wearing away too quickly with ingress and egress of vehicles. Chair requested Michael to send photos and he will raise with Council.

Julie Smith

- The lights in The Village Green appear to be on very late. Can they be turned off earlier? This has been raised previously with the Works Manager and the length of time that they are in operation is to deter vandals.

Scott Bennett

- Street light at the top of south Church Street. Is it possible to have a shade put on the light? This area is utilised extensively by photographers and sightseers looking out over the floodplain towards Hobart and the Aurora Australis. The unshaded light creates light pollution for photographers. This area is at the end of the street and is an underutilised area. Has contacted TasNetworks who referred him to NMC. Chair asked Scott to forward email from TasNetworks to him, and he will follow up.

8 NEXT MEETING/CLOSURE

The Chair closed the meeting at 12.05 am.

Next meeting – Tuesday 6th June 2023 commencing 11.15am in the Ross Reading Room.