

Port Underwood Association



Welcome to the Spring 2015 issue of the Port Underwood Association newsletter.

Its been a very wet winter here, at least, that is the way it appears to me. So, all your water tanks should be full. There was so much rain that the road at the South end of the bridge in Robin Hood Bay was washed away leaving a large gap between the road and the bridge. Last year, the North end of the bridge was washed away. In the rains last year there were several landslips closing the roads as well. The landslips were not so prominent this year; but, it all adds up to the need to take extra care on the road in bad weather. The unexpected can happen.

At the moment Transpower have contractors that are spray cleaning, painting and tightening the bolts on the main power line going through Port Underwood. Other contractors are raising some towers and still more are clearing the gorse from under the towers. This is likely to go on into the summer. This means there are lots of contractors' vehicles about. Occasionally there are trucks directly across the road as they load or unload – it can be a great surprise when you go around a corner to find a blocked road a few metres in front of you.

I have been a little lax in updating the website, www.portunderwoodassoc.org, due to time constraints. I will address this soon. The Association would appreciate contributions from members on any other issue that relates to Port Underwood. So, please contact us on port.underwood.association@gmail.com or write direct to committee members.

Best wishes John

Committee members

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Port Underwood Association contact details:

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Marlborough Marine Futures

John Davison and Ken Roush attended the meeting on 9 August. This covered the several science matters concerning the Sounds. NIWA outlined the Atlantis model developed for Tasman and Golden Bays. This models how the marine environment will alter under differing scenarios. It would be interesting to see if this modeling could be extended to the Sounds. There was also a talk about bio security and all the pests in the region. Examples include *Undaria*, *Didemnum vexillum* and Mediterranean fanworm. No doubt there are, and will be, more.

A talk was given by Raymond Smith concerning the post Treaty settlement. This provided an interesting outline of the position of the iwi and emphasized the need to engage with iwi. The Davidson Environmental monitoring report was also discussed. This includes a 2011 significant marine sites inventory report and a monitoring report. This seems to be a good start to understanding the marine environment of the Sounds; some further details are given below.

Links to the report, meeting notes and other items will be added to the Port Underwood website. Further information can be obtained from:

<http://www.marlmarinefutures.co.nz>

Coastal Marine Science

There have been a number of scientific studies of the coastal marine area produced recently by the Marlborough District Council which can be accessed online at:

<http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Coastal/Coastal-Reports.aspx>

There is also a form for people to record their memories regarding the environmental changes that have been noticed in the Sounds or coastal Marlborough over the years. Once the form is completed a copy will go the provider and then into a MDC folder within the filing network. There is a privacy statement and whether the Council can use the information in publications. This is a great tool to capture people's remembrances and become part of the story. This is located at:

<https://eservices.marlborough.govt.nz/onlineservices/new/CoastalFeedback/step/1>

Subdivisions

Oyster Bay Development

The developers appealed against the decision (that was in their favour). The developers wanted to reduce the planting scheme that they had suggested and also the sprinkler system that they had volunteered to put in. There was a mediation hearing, which I, John Davison, attended. The purpose of attending was to try and retain the planting scheme. The Council, however, was not concerned and this undermined our position. Consequently, the developers got their way. The matter concerning the sprinkler system is going to the Court for a full appeal. It is a concern that the Fire Service will require any new development more than 20 minutes from a fire station to have a full sprinkler system installed.

Peninsula at the end of Tumbledown Bay Road

The area currently being logged (pretty much the whole peninsula on the Eastern side of the Port) has been subdivided into 30 hectare blocks. This was a permitted activity so there has been no hearing regarding this. Obviously people may have differing views on this, but subdivisions for residential occupation may be more desirable than further forestry activity. One interesting point is that several of the blocks will have no road access; they will have boat access only and this will undoubtedly require more moorings and parking facilities. This could cause issues in the future.

Rural broadband in Port Underwood

Vodafone currently has the government contract for rural broadband in New Zealand. One household in Port Underwood inquired about the broadband in Port Underwood and was told that it was not available at his home. Vodafone came out to give it a try anyway. They installed an antenna and a modem and it worked. They said that it was even faster than anything in town. There is a website www.vodafone.co.nz/broadband/rural Click on broadband/ then rural broadband/ and type in your address. This will show the current broadband coverage and future coverage.

When I (Sara Roush) followed all of the prompts it showed that our house would never have coverage. So, I phoned Vodafone at 0800 777 042 to ask if this was correct. Vodafone said that was incorrect and that our house could get coverage now. He also said that there is a possibility of supplying broadband in a non-supply area as long as there are at least two potential customers in a small area that currently have Vodafone cell phone coverage. There are different plans and a two-year contract; so it is worth checking your coverage.

Freedom Camping By-laws

Marlborough District Council has been working on Freedom Camping By-laws over the last several years, trialling various methods to make freedom camping beneficial to all. They are still interested in more feedback with the need to understand - Is responsible camping wanted and; does Marlborough want to allow the responsible camper and; What is being done with the non-compliant – the issue is always going to be there. Whether a Bylaw is in place, there are always going to be people abusing the system versus the no camping.

If there are particular sites which cause problems the Council needs to know to be able to address the situation.

The current by-law which will remain in effect for 2016 can be viewed at:

<http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Recreation/Parks-and-Reserves/Camping/Freedom-Camping-Bylaw>

National Environment Standard for Plantation Forestry (NEP – PF)

Central Government has been working on a National Standard for Plantation Forestry over a couple of years. The aim of the document is to create national standards so that foresters will know what they need to do to get consents. It is a pro-business document, which is not a bad thing in itself. Whilst the central thrust seems good it is a nationwide document and concerns exist that it may not be adequate to cover the different aspects of specific areas such as the Marlborough Sounds. Michael Blaschke prepared a response for the Association expressing this concern. The Council has also submitted a response that expresses a concern that the particular erosion risks of the Sounds are adequately dealt with by the national paper.

Marlborough District Council Ward Representation

The Local Government Commission will be reviewing the method of representation for the Marlborough District council for the 2016 elections. Currently 3 councillors represent the large rural Wairau-Awatere ward, 3 represent the Sounds ward and the remaining 7 represent urban Blenheim. Options for 2016 can include the status quo, or councillors elected as general representatives by the whole district or a combination of the two. MDC would like your feedback on this to Mike Porter, Democratic Services Coordinator:

mike.porter@marlborough.govt.nz

Neighbourhood support update

Thankfully, it has been quiet in the Port since our last newsletter although break-ins in other Sounds areas have been reported which consisted of mainly sleeping and eating in the houses with no major theft. The police have issued a press release regarding this. They have stated that due to the remoteness of some of the locations that they believe the offender may be using a boat and also walking to access these properties. They have asked that anyone who discovers their property has been broken into should contact Police immediately and if possible avoid disturbing the scene until Police have had the opportunity to examine it.

A new rural newsletter from the Police will also be added to the website shortly.

Sara Roush will be updating the neighbourhood support lists before the next newsletter, so if any information we have for you is incorrect, such as phone or fire number, would you please advise her on sarakenroush@gmail.com

Subscriptions

Most of you have paid your subs for the 2015 financial year and we thank you for your continued support. For those of you who have not paid yet, I have enclosed a subs reminder notice in with this newsletter

Snippets from the Past

Murray & Irene Eagle - Fighting Bay

Murray and his wife Irene were lighthouse keepers in Stephens Island and Portman Islands until manned lighthouses were no longer needed. The isolation suited them, so in 1982 they moved to Fighting Bay, where Murray had taken the job as cable station operator, monitoring the operating conditions of the cables that transferred electricity from the South Island to the North Island.

While in Fighting Bay, Murray started a successful electronics business, which designed many things including equipment for both vineyards and mussel farms. In 2011, after 28 years of living and working in Fighting Bay, it was decided that the cables could be monitored from a distance, so Murray and Irene moved to Picton and continued to stay in touch with many of their Port Underwood friends.

We regret to say that Murray Eagle, this long time icon of Port Underwood, passed away this July 2015 after a long illness. His quick wit, humour and friendship will be greatly missed.

We are privileged to have his contribution to our snippets from the past.

Fighting Bay: Top o' the South.



Fighting Bay, the southern terminal of the Cook Strait cable link, is widely held to be the hub of the universe and second only to Hao atoll as the world's most desirable spot. This view was strengthened when a local radio station's Win-a-Wish lady winner expressed a long-held desire to visit Fighting Bay. Her wish was granted; she and a friend made the trip to the bay,

all organised by Marlborough Lines. To those scoffers I say- how many ladies have to win a competition just to come to your part of the world? Besides, 'Spend a Day at Fighting Bay' has a poetic ring to it and while 'Let's Bob to Cobb and See the Mob on the Job' has some merit (if we still had Cobb, or Mobs, or Jobs), what can one do with Waimangaroa or Upper Takaka?

Evidence that the Bay is the centre of things is the attraction it has for fishermen's craypots, divers, people in big hats in small boats and the like; all are drawn into the restricted area like the North Pole draws a compass needle. This Power can be felt over great distances, apparently, even to half way around the world. One gentleman who was instructed to remove his fishing gear, his vessel and himself from Fighting Bay told me his name was Harold Wilson. I remember thinking at the time how different he looked without his pipe and his Gannex raincoat... Others have been strangely affected with this Power: some suffer visual impairment- "I didn't see any huge sign marking the entrance to Fighting Bay"; others go through an identity crisis- "I saw the sign but I didn't know it meant me". The cheekiest case was that of a commercial diver (previously photographed working in the protected area) who, shortly after we were corporatised, zoomed into the beach in a 6 metre Naiad with twin zillion horsepower outboards and said, "Now the Hydro is a Corporation and not a Government department, will you find out if I can dive for paua in the bay and pay a royalty to Electricorp?"

It is difficult to know whether or not living at the source of the Power has any effect on one's health. My opposite number at Oteranga Bay (the North Island terminal), when asked some years ago by a budding Lois Lane at a Wellington newspaper of the effect on his mental health of living near a high voltage field ended the interview by saying it hadn't affected him because he must have been "...@#\$% mad to come here in the first place...." and slammed the 'phone down. But when Those In Control decide that old cables need less surveillance than when they were new and a presence at Fighting Bay is no longer required, then I fear the words of Al Jolson in 'The Jazz Singer', "You ain't heard nothin' yet" will ring prophetically true.

Murray Eagle, Ex-Cable Station Operator