



Gateway to the Manning!

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Minutes of the JRCPA Management Committee
Meeting on 3rd May 2008, 1pm at the Johns River General Store

Committee Members in Attendance:

Meeting began at 13:10pm at the outdoor courtyard of the Johns River General Store, chaired by President Glen Ferrero, VP David Shepard, Treasurer Bruce Shaw, and Ordinary Committee Members Deena Lane and Rod Heath.

Apologies

Apologies were given in advance by Secretary Chris Bawn. Michael Williams and Kerri Williams failed to apologise and did not attend the meeting.

Glen reiterated for all Management Committee members that regular committee meetings were on the first Saturday of each month, and that in case there were any problems with some people being able to collect their e-mail, he would additionally phone people next time.

Welcome New Committee Member(s)

Glen welcomed the new Committee members, both those present (Deena Lane) and absent (the Williams), and made a joke that he hoped that returning Secretary Chris Bawn had bitterly cold awful weather in Europe for his holiday.

Glen said he would follow up as to why Michael and Kerri failed to attend. He thanked Frank for his contribution of the store terrace for the meeting

Studio Meeting Space

Glen also thanked Deena for offering her studio meeting space for future meetings of the Association.

Deena said the space could accommodate 8, had tea-making facilities and the studio has a side entrance for the convenience of members attending should the Association wish to further consider the option in the near future.

Glen thanked Deena for the offer, and called for new memberships, mentioning that he had one from Stan on the corner of Stewarts River Road. David said he seemed he seemed like a very nice bloke, and Deena said it would be good to have input from him due to his location on the corner of Stewart's River road and the highway. He was voted in unanimously.

Glen moved on to mention it's always a core group of people who do things for the committee, and that this is a situation which should probably change. He noted that in the last committee, there was one member who would always come in and sit down at meetings without contributing, when there was plenty to do as far as set up goes.

The people who did not attend the AGM or were there by proxy will need to have copies of the AGM sent to them at some point within the next fortnight. Deena quickly volunteered to do the dozen or so envelopes by hand and to mail them. Glen said he had stamps and would ensure she had the stamps enough for the job.

Bruce was asked if he had the Treasurer position information and paraphernalia from Chris Bawn, the previous treasurer. Bruce said he'd go get his 100 points check at the bank and make arrangements to sign on to the Association's account at the Credit Union.

Glen noted that Chris could hand over to himself for the Secretary position, presumably with a minimum of ceremony. Bruce asked David, now the he had supplanted the previous Vice President, if he too would continue the tradition of setting up his own table at meetings, and David responded that no, he would remain with the group at such events.

Our village delegate to the Council's Post-Bypass urban design committee reported that the most recently planned meeting was cancelled due to Graham Gardner, the GTCC Director of Planning, being unable to attend. The meeting had apparently also been relocated a few times from room to room, and in the end, it was a non-event and postponed until the 21st or 23rd of May.

As far as Chris Bawn's wholly self-centred absence from that meeting (he's probably enjoying prosciutto in Tuscany), Glen mentioned that he'd thought about having someone go in his stead, but Councillor Wilson had said that any fill-in person for that delegate slot could only listen but not vote in the meeting – and also that insurance might be an issue as well.

Rather than set a precedent in having people switch out in the position, Glen opined that it would be better to leave these situations as-is, so that only apologies would be given should someone in the future be unable to attend as delegate. Deena concurred that yes, a loophole would be formed if we did not act on this. Glen proposed that only apologies be given and that the community wishes for delegates be respected, as was voted by the membership at the April AGM. He proposed that the committee not fill delegate vacancies on the Council's Post-Bypass committee. Rod seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

Deena mentioned that the number of committee members was now 4, and that this should be reflected in the rules. Glen mentioned this was discussed during the AGM and that the membership had clearly chosen to vary this number. Glen asked for the secretary to ensure this decision of the membership be included in the proposed rule changes to be submitted to the DFT in the near future.

The CLG group meeting was cancelled due to RDOs and probably to help with maintenance issues and the ability of members to return to their respective geographic bases. The wet weather also seemed to contribute to the RTA/Alliance decision to cancel the meeting. It was also mentioned by Bruce that some members of the CLG group, in particular those of the Alliance in attendance, had waned significantly, rather bringing into question their willingness to be part of the community liaison process. It was agreed that this issue would be brought up at the next CLG to query the lack of interest, contribution and attendance by the Alliance members at the CLG meetings.

Glen said there was a minor realignment of Stewart's River Road, and that in that process, there was a question about the disposition and preservation of the turn-in at the Tavern driveway. The goal by the owner of the Tavern was to ensure the turn-in size was unreduced, since the owner had paid to have that done originally. The owner did look at plans for the turn-in with Alliance staff.

Glen then turned to issues raised at the AGM.

Johns River having its own postcode was howled down at the AGM, since 2443 links us into Laurieton, and was generally seen as making Johns River more desirable than having a Taree postcode.

Deena asked what this was about, David mentioned the mortgage reinsurance company issue, whereby major lenders such as Macquarie and others used mortgage underwriters who based their rates and whether or not they'd insure a loan based on postcode. The 2443 postcode lacks sufficient density to qualify for some underwriters apparently.

Bruce felt that there was a community grouping issue, and this was a consideration for those wishing a separate postcode for Johns River. However, he continued, for us to have a separate postcode, it might be a movement without an end as nearby communities such as Hannam Vale might well be wanting their own. It was agreed this was more an issue for the post office, and to drop the item from the Association agenda.

Glen brought to the meeting a great book from the Johns River Public School, which outlined the history of the school and community. He proposed to form a History Subcommittee to gather and document the history of the area with the ultimate aim of getting it into digital format.

Deena agreed that it would help for others to understand the concern of the older community members and how change can impact on this important segment of our village.

Glen asked that the committee members would please ask around and see who is interested in the history of the region. He proposed that we start a History Subcommittee to collate information first of the area, with the decisions of what to do and how to publish later. Bruce and Deena seconded and it was passed unanimously.

The next AGM item Glen addressed was that of advertising, and for the committee to approach businesses who may wish to advertise on the website, with the clear understanding that the profit would go towards the subsidised membership scheme for memberships with the JRCPA. Glen said that we must sit down and work out a cost structure, and that incorporated in that would be an advertising ability for any newsletter sent out to the community.

Deena said with our local internet service and the lower than average rates of internet adoption in the village, that paper might be better. Glen agreed that every month or couple of months or so we could do a paper version of the newsletter for a letterbox drop.

Deena felt it was vitally important that people have something in the letterbox so everyone could be on the same page on subject discussed and village events. Deena enquired how the Association is doing financially, and Glen repeated that our balance was around \$800 as was at the last AGM meeting. Glen reiterated that it was mostly due to the low expenses that we have the balance, like Joe the Postie delivering for free, and also for siteware doing a lot of the printing for free.

The Telstra substation manhole issue raised by Paul is underway, and photos have been taken to be presented to Council for consideration. The manhole itself is not in disrepair, making it not a Telstra issue per se, and is due to erosion issues around the installation. Glen proposed that we take it to Council, and Rod seconded, and it was carried unanimously.

On the issue of an oval at the hall, Glen said hall and the existing grounds was a community asset. On the 13th of July, Rod said there was going to be picnic and a cricket match by the Mid North Coast Vintage Car Club on the hall ground oval.

Glen asked that we organise an intergroup meeting with the hall and school committees, and that we issue a letter from the JRCPA requesting a quarterly meeting to touch base on what is going on so we can jointly manage overlap of interests and activities. One of the big things last year on this note was the tennis courts, as the school rules had changed about only allowing incorporated bodies to use the courts.

Deena mentioned a bit about the history of the tennis court saga, saying that the courts at the hall had been in terrible disrepair. At one point, the shed was removed to the school about the time the beginning of the Disadvantaged Schools Program. The construction of the tennis courts at the school was auspiced under that program with the clear understanding at the time that the community would be able to use the courts.

The shed which was donated by the community was then appropriated by a preschool group, and the tennis court further began to be used as a playground for the preschool.

Deena said this fundamental misunderstanding between community expectations and school policies underscored the importance of intergroup communications.

Glen said, that in the same vein, some members of the community have called on Council to take over the hall, although maintenance issues would clearly be an issue. He noted that the council maintained portion of the reserve at Koolyangarra hadn't been mown now in 8 months.

Deena agreed that we should liaise with the other groups such as the P&C and the Hall Committee on issues of how things are run.

David asked if the Hall committee has memberships, and Rod said it was a Reserve Trust appointed by the state government.

Bruce said there is a problem with the number of groups and committees, and people understanding what each one was. Deena agreed she'd been approached by people like that as well, not fundamentally understanding the different roles of the CLG, Post-Bypass, and JRCPA committees.

Glen asked for the committee to approve the proposal to send a letter to the other organisations, Deena seconded and all voted in favour.

David asked if we should talk to the school, and Glen said we will do a letter to the school before issues in particular are raised.

Deena said the tennis court at Obadiah was built for community use with public funds or a grant of some kind, and that we should investigate that. Glen mentioned that the Council Post-Bypass committee could handle this.

"Horse Riders Ahead" signs were needed according to a few village residents, an issue raised at the AGM, and an issue suitable for the Post-Bypass committee and the CLG to bring up at the next meeting according to Glen, who added that Wharf Road apparently is a stock route according to some local residents.

Glen then spoke to the issue of water under the road and railway lines, which Mr. Galati had brought up at a recent CLG meeting. He reported that Mr. Whibley had spoken to Mr. Galati to say he'd be happy to come out and look at the potential problem along with the JRCPA President, Glen.

As yet, Glen said he had not been informed about any such meeting, although he believed the meeting may well have taken place.

It is a true issue which has affected community members, and has been there since the railway put in the pipes according to member Mr. Malcolm Bulley. David noted that there actually had been none of the normal back-up during the week of heavy rains recently.

Glen said he would bring up the issue again at the next CLG meeting to ensure the matter was being addressed, or had been addressed satisfactorily.

Other Business

Getting Answers

David mentioned how we get no responses from the Alliance about basic issues such as the turnaround area in front of the pub. The committee agreed. David then asked if anyone had any particular issues with getting responses from the RTA/Alliance or Council.

Bruce did concur that slow responses have been a big issue, and he cited a few situations where questions were still unanswered. Glen pointed out that the lack of finalised plans is an issue somewhat plaguing the project generally, so there simply may not be definitive answers for many community enquiries. Glen said this will be brought up at the next CLG meeting.

Facilities for Youth

David brought up the subject of a skate park or other recreational facility for the younger segment in town, since we had previously discussed a tennis court, something with admittedly limited appeal to most younger village residents.

Glen said that \$600 was raised by a previous store owner for the skate park, and this money was still being held in trust. It was agreed to again canvas community sentiment about facilities for children in the near future, possibly in the next printed newsletter.

Youth Crime

Rod opined that youth with nothing better to do in the village had resulted in 2 new locks on the toilet being stolen amongst other hijinx. David asked what other problems youth had caused. Rod attributed the smashing of ventilators, destroying a security grill in the hall kitchen, burning of the door, appropriated milkshake makers, and about \$1200 worth of drinks stolen to village youth. The police response has been to dust for prints, and that they can only hold the records until the youth is caught the first time and then the previous offence can be used to show prior involvement in such activities.

Deena felt the youth crime issue could be primarily attributed to the high levels of illicit drug use in the village by the parents of many youth. Deena said it was faster to count the people who were not users than to count those that are in the village. To buy their own drugs, or in some cases, simply food, village youth turn to crime, often on local businesses and village amenities such as the halls.

The situation is so prevalent, that on at least one occasion, there are even kids who have aspirations of growing up and being a criminal

Possible Approaches

The Management Committee continued discussion noting that youth crime and community drug use were clearly related. As to solutions, David asked about if community education would be effective, because only demand-focused abatement measures seemed to have any effect in lowering substance abuse rates. None of the supply-side efforts have ever really worked, he continued.

Glen said that despite that, a program of harm minimisation was really needed in dealing with the impact on the village from any form of addiction, from gambling addiction to alcohol addiction, and other forms of addiction. Johns River also has sexual health issues, and a higher than average rate of teenage birthing.

So, all of those factors present in our village mean that education alone is not an entirely appropriate policy. He explained that harm minimisation included counselling after the event, as well as an effective needle and syringe exchange program to ensure clean needles are available for village residents who are currently using.

Glen continued to explain that our Australian NSEP program is known around the world for it's proven ability to save lives and save taxpayer money by avoiding unnecessary burden to the health system.

David agreed that prohibition simply has never once worked in human history.

Resource Promotion Strategy

All members agreed that harm minimisation and education -- including referrals targeted to each segment of our village -- was the policy position the Association should adopt.

Glen proposed that the Association advocate both a harm minimisation and informative education strategy to promote the Kids Help Line, Lifeline and similar community resources to village members.

All agreed this could be part of our upcoming newsletter and on the website, and Deena further noted that at a future point, it could benefit the village to have a youth group or youth events, as well as dedicated person who has completed a background check to organise such activities. It was agreed that a Youth Activity Subcommittee could be formed at some point in the future for these things.

ALL- No further items

No other items for discussion.

Meeting closed – 14.30pm– 3rd May 2008.

Minutes confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting held.


R.G. Fenner

President of JRCPA Inc.