



# The Inlet

Newsletter for Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet

APRIL

2024

*The Inlet is a newsletter that brings together local and regional news affecting the Pāuatahanui Inlet and its environs.*

*The Inlet comes out three times a year and current or back issues can be downloaded from our website.*

*The newsletter includes items of concern that affect the area as well as general interest topics for everyone.*

*Please contact us if you would like to contribute to The Inlet.*

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## FROM THE CHAIR

As you may know, the Government has produced a Fast Track Approvals Bill to enable fast track consenting of a potentially huge range of major national and regional projects such as infrastructure and urban development projects. This Bill overrides all local government plans and consent processes under the Resource Management Act, and many other legislative provisions, and contains unprecedented powers that enable ministers to take final decisions on any projects that are consented through its fast track process. The Fast Track Bill:



- Contains no meaningful environmental criteria either in its purpose or processes;
- Severely limits participation rights by environmental groups such as ours and by local communities;
- Limits involvement by local government and, especially, has the potential to completely shut out and override provisions in district and regional plans and impose compliance and enforcement costs on local government;
- Has the potential to cause adverse and potentially irreversible effects on the environment and its ecosystems and on properties adjoining Fast Track consented projects;
- Overrides environmental and conservation legislation including the Resource Management Act, the Conservation Act, the Wildlife Act, the Reserves Act, the Fisheries Act, the Crown Minerals Act and Heritage and Exclusive Economic Zone legislation;
- As mentioned above, gives Ministers the sole and unprecedented power to make decisions on projects and give approvals, even if the decision-making panels set up under the legislation recommend declining a consent;
- Has limited rights of appeal (to the High Court only on points of law) and no appeal to an expert court such as the Environment Court.

We, together with Te Awa-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchments Community Trust, are making a submission to the Environment Select Committee on this Bill. When finalised, it will be available on our website.

On the subject of major projects, the New Zealand Herald had an article dated the 1st of March on the continuing failure of the Transmission Gully Project to

### *From the Chair .....cont.*

complete its requirements for environmental protection and how the Greater Wellington Regional Council was moving to use a much tougher enforcement process from now on. The GWRC Chair, Daran Ponter, was quoted as saying:

*'It has been difficult to hold parties to account for their treatment of the environment throughout the Transmission Gully project.*

*The regional council might have approached resource consenting and compliance differently if it had its time again.*

*There's a need to really look at this big-style project with big players and how you actually hold them to account.'*

The article also said:

*'Greater Wellington Regional Council has dismissed 17 charges related to the mega Transmission Gully highway and is instead going down another legal avenue to protect the environment.*

*The charges were dismissed in August last year with the majority of them related to sediment discharges from open earthworks into water courses across the project.*

*It's the latest development in what has become a questionable environmental track record for the \$1.25 billion motorway.*

*The long-awaited road was opened to traffic almost two years ago but technically remains unfinished and is facing legal challenges on more than one front.'*

It went on to say:

*'In 2021, GWRC's lawyer Andrew Britton told the Environment Court the streams (subject to a prosecution) were not just affected by fine sediment, but also by rocks and boulders going down the hillsides.*

*He said the JV [Joint Venture] did not take steps to mitigate what happened or alert the council to something being wrong until days after the fact.*

*The attitude of the JV appears to have been careless or cavalier.'*

Meanwhile, CPB HEB JV has launched its own legal action against NZTA amid the wrangle to get the road fully finished. NZTA transport services general manager Brett Gliddon has previously said the dispute relates to incomplete works on the road and the expectation these should be completed to the standard in the project's contract.

Assurances have been made that Transmission Gully continues to be safe and open for public use. Sadly, it seems the saga of inadequate environmental management of this big project is not over yet. This project was at least subject to some well-crafted consent conditions which were too often ignored. Imagine what could happen with projects under the new Fast Track Approvals Bill where there may be limited and inadequate environmental protections. Further, the Bill appears silent on the critical matters of compliance and enforcement - the very matters that led to the long list of the TGM compliance breaches.

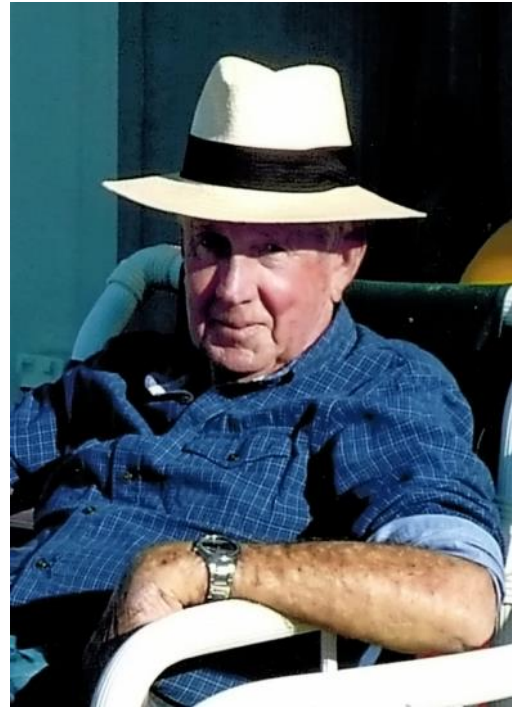
## DENIS FAIRFAX – OBITUARY

It is with sadness we have to announce the passing of a former and much valued member of GOPI, Denis Fairfax. He died on the 9th of April 2024.

Denis joined the GOPI committee in 2010 as Secretary and held that position until 2013. His resignation came with a promise to remain in the position until a new secretary was found. He consequently ended up remaining on the committee as Acting Secretary until our 2015 AGM when Helen Reilly took over. During his tenure he was supported by his wife, Beverly, who was also a committee member and was Webmaster for GOPI. She was also involved in media communications promoting our various activities.

Denis had been a member of the Friends of Mana Island and in 2004 offered to undertake an oral history project. This involved him recording recollections from people who had worked on Mana Island from the time it was farmed to the years it became a scientific reserve.

During his time with the Guardians, Denis contributed to our regular committee and AGM meetings, both personally and as Secretary. He always supported and contributed consistently to many activities of the Guardians including the annual clean-up.



*Denis Fairfax*



Denis had a varied and distinguished career which involved both the Australian and New Zealand navies and then, when he left the forces, he was appointed, in 1988, as Chief Executive Officer of the Wellington Free Ambulance. He was also an Officer of the Order of St John and a former president of Navy League Wellington. For many years, Denis' focus has been as a historian, researching and writing about maritime history.

In recent times Denis experienced several years of ill health but we understand his Christian faith gave him considerable strength of mind and will to live. In the end he died peacefully on the 9th April at Wellington Hospital. Rest in peace.

*Beverly and Denis*

*(Photographs provided by Beverly)*



## SHOW US YOUR HARBOUR

It had been nearly two years in the planning but, on 1 February this year, the harbour-wide photographic competition, *Show Us Your Harbour*, finally reached its climax with the presentation of awards and opening of the exhibition at Pataka.

This competition, announced originally in our August 2022 newsletter, was proposed by Christine Stanley of the Porirua Harbour Trust (also on the committee of GOPI) and developed by Christine Jacobson. Christine Jacobson is also a trustee of the Porirua Harbour Trust and, alongside other responsibilities, has put in an enormous amount of work to bring the competition to fruition. It was designed to showcase the whole harbour and its surrounding streams and hillside scenery. Working in conjunction with Janet Ryan of the Guardians, the planning took some of the concepts used in the GOPI competition and raised it to a very professional level. Credit for this also goes to the other members of the organising committee: Daryl Hayes, Helen Waldron, Nick Maitland and Paula van Wijmen.

The presentation took place in the public space of Pataka and was attended by over 125 people including the entrants as well as organisers, family and friends and additional invitees. The programme involved some very notable speakers. The Director of the Pataka Art Museum, Ana Sciascia, opened the proceedings with mihi (welcome), followed by a waiata (chant) and then handed over to the Chair of the Porirua Harbour Trust, Michael Player, who acted as Master of Ceremonies on behalf of the Porirua Harbour Trust and GOPI.



*Simon Woolf and Christine Jacobson*

Michael spoke of the success of the competition and the outstanding level of photographic excellence demonstrated by all the entrants.

A very enthusiastic talk followed, given by Simon Woolf. Simon is a Wellington Regional councillor and well-known personality in the field of photography, and contributed to the competition by printing all of the award-winning images for the exhibition. With ever-present camera slung from his shoulder, Simon highlighted the importance of this competition in its ability to change peoples' perceptions of the harbour and thereby encourage its care and protection for future generations.

Simon then proceeded to announce the awards while certificates for each of the categories were passed by Christine Jacobson to Anita Baker, Mayor of Porirua, who was there to congratulate the winners and present the certificates to each one.

The award categories were: Scenic, Nature, Artistic, Recreation and Challenges as well as College and Primary School awards.

The whole event was recorded in camera by Geoff Marshall of the Porirua Photography Club, from which the featured images have been selected.



*Anita Baker and Te Kawa Robb, winner of the Thom Kenny Award for the photo that captures people having fun, playing in the water, engaging with the harbour.*

### *Show Us Your Harbour ....cont.*

Following the presentation, the exhibition of award-winning and outstanding photographs, displayed on the walls of the Bottle Creek Gallery, was formally opened by Pataka staff. And what an exhibition it was. The quality of photography was amazing and a good hour of appreciative comment and discussion was had among everyone, allowing the entrants to talk about their images, how they were created and the message each was attempting to convey.

Interestingly, some of the winners were well known to the Guardians as they had been entrants to our own competitions over many years. But there were also many names among the winners and runners-up that we haven't seen before and we offer our congratulations to all of them for the wonderful portrayal of the harbour in all its various facets.

Altogether, the exhibition was highly professional with the outstanding images perfectly framed for display and grouped according to category.

If you missed the exhibition, which closed at the end of March, all the images that were awarded first place in each category are still viewable on the [Porirua Harbour Trust](#) website.



*Michael Player (PHT) and Lindsay Gow (GOPI) at the entrance to the Bottle Creek Gallery exhibition.*



*Part of the exhibition at the Bottle Creek Gallery in Pataka. The photographs on display were those considered to be the best images entered, both winners and runners-up. (Photo: Michael Waldron)*

The whole competition and exhibition was sponsored, among others, by Clark & Co., Porirua City Council (Harbours Team) and Trust House Foundation, with photography by Woolf and Epson. The prizes were provided by some of the sponsors including The Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet (see Page 11). A full list of the sponsors and their contribution is also available at the [Porirua Harbour Trust](#) website.

At the exhibition an additional award — The Peoples Choice award — was set up to allow the general public, rather than the expert judging panel, to vote on its favourite image from those on display by ballot box located in the gallery. The result of this was announced on 8 April and the Peoples Choice Award went

## Show Us Your Harbour ....cont.

to Brian Wesley-Smith for his photograph of boat houses at sunrise entitled 'Dawn'. Congratulations Brian.



*'Dawn'. Brian Wesley-Smith*

*Winner of Peoples Choice Award*

Finally, as a corollary to this event, the usual GOPI Photographic Competition has not been held this year so as to avoid a clash with this much larger contest. Later on, we will review whether or not to run a future competition in 2025 and will advise our membership accordingly in the December newsletter. Feedback from our readership on this option would be welcome in assisting with our decision.

## INLET CLEAN-UP

The weather forecast was for rain. Perhaps not heavy but intermittent, so that the conditions would be wet; wind may also have been a factor. Well, it didn't happen. While it was cloudy with a light breeze, the conditions were ideal for the many volunteers who came along to Browns Bay for this year's annual Pāuatahanui Inlet Clean-up.

There was no shortage of public support. About 50 volunteers turned out, including 11 from Conservation Volunteers New Zealand (CVNZ), ten from Scouts, nine Geocashers, five GOPI committee members and up to 20 members of the general public and their children.



Registration from 10:30 am at Browns Bay. In the foreground from left to right: Nigel Clarke, Janet Ryan and Roni Mohan.

Support was provided by Janet Ryan from GOPI with registration, Roni Mohan from CVNZ for the safety equipment like bags, gloves and Hi-Vis vests, and from Nigel Clarke (PCC Senior Advisor Harbour and Catchment) who was there to take part in the collection and join in with the social aspect of the event at the end of the morning.

The number of volunteers was a little higher than in previous years, in part due probably to the advertising we did on our website and on our Facebook page with its associated local community links. Consequently, some areas of the shore were covered by more than one team but different zones of these areas, from water's edge to road reserve, were searched and

**Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet**  
**CLEAN-UP**  
SUNDAY  
3 March 2024  
(Wet or Dry)

REGISTER AT BROWNS BAY  
CAR PARK 10:30am

- Wear warm clothes and strong shoes or boots
- Gloves, hi-viz vests and rubbish bags are supplied
- There is no collection of rubbish on the road side

Free family sausage sizzle at Browns Bay Park, 12.00 Noon

Supported by **Conservation Volunteers New Zealand**

Enquiries to: GUARDIANS OF PĀUATAHANUI INLET  
pauiat@pauatahanuiinlet.govt.nz --- Tel: 021 139 284

### *Inlet Clean-up ....cont.*

all teams gathered a reasonable quantity of discarded litter. Included in the range of material collected were tyres, buoys, boxes of empty bottles, a collection of seed planting trays, old signage, a couple of waratahs, balls, bottles, cans, clothing, takeaway cups and packaging, and countless uncategorised plastic fragments.

For the first time we weighed the rubbish bags as they were returned by each team, recording the region of shore searched as well as a general idea of the material found. While a few teams collected a half kilogram or less, the weight of some bags was between 4 and 8 kg. In some cases we had to weigh a single item or two, as they were too heavy to put in the rubbish bag. In total the public removed over 115 kg of litter from the shore. A wide range of material was dumped by casual public disposal from takeaway food outlets, fishing parties, revellers and various commercial firms from the Porirua Area.



*Roni Mohan with the early stages of returned rubbish. At the end of the morning there were three times as many bags plus other items as seen here.*

Two people also collected a lot of material from under the Paremata bridge, a well-known site of congregated rubbish, gathered there by wind and water currents. The bags collected at this location were left behind and not recorded at the registration table. Otherwise they would have added considerably to the total weight of litter found on the shores of the harbour.



*Volunteers gathered around the trailer enjoying the sausage sizzle and refreshing drinks laid on by Ray and Janet Ryan.*

Around midday, when volunteers began to return with what they had gathered from the shore, a sausage sizzle was fired up by Ray Ryan with food supplied, this year, by Janet. A special purpose BBQ trailer, interestingly decorated, was loaned to us by Rutherford Bond Toyota for this purpose.

Altogether, we were thrilled with the morning's success, albeit a disappointing reflection on the general public's approach to waste management, and we thank all who took part in the morning's clean-up of the Inlet for another year.



## FEATURE ARTICLE

During the 'Show Us Your Harbour' exhibition on 1 February at Bottle Creek Gallery, Porirua City Council included a sideshow that highlighted the litter problem plaguing our little city and its suburbs. As GOPI has only recently conducted its annual Clean-up of Pāuatahanui Inlet perhaps it is an appropriate time to discuss this issue and its wider implications. So, this time the feature article takes on the problems that litter causes for everyone.

### LITTER — ITS CAUSES AND CONCERNS

Litter is waste in the wrong place.

In recent years, oceanic research teams have measured quantities of 'litter' in the depths of the oceans. Much of this is what is classified as microplastics, plastic particles which are less than 5mm in size and often microscopic. Microplastics come from cosmetics, medicinal and industrial processes and from the breakdown of larger plastic waste, all of which spreads throughout the environment by the action of wind and water into rivers and oceans. Microplastics have been found to exist almost everywhere. They get into the food chain and thus into bodies of animals such as fish, turtles, whales, birds and have even been found in the human body. And that is definitely the wrong place.

**Love Porirua?  
Keep it litter free**

**WHAT IS LITTER?**

**Litter is waste in the wrong place.**  
Some of it stays around for a very long time:

Apple core 4-6 WEEKS	Cardboard box 2 MONTHS
Balloons 4 YEARS	Plastic bags 20 YEARS
Drink cans 200 YEARS	Plastic bottles 450 YEARS
Fishing line 600 YEARS	Glass bottles 1 MILLION YEARS

porirua city

Plastic waste not only affects and even destroys a wide range of fauna but it affects us too. We ingest it, posing serious risks to human health.

But microplastics are only part of the story. Litter also consists of discarded paper, wood, metal, clothing, food, and automotive and construction materials. It is created by both the casual and careless disposal of discarded items by individuals as well as by accidental activities of industrial and commercial enterprises. The very slow rate of degradation of most litter items, together with the continuously growing quantity of the waste material disposed of, is leading to a progressive and dramatic increase in the quantities of litter found globally throughout the biosphere – both terrestrial and aquatic.

Closer to home, New Zealand’s national litter problem has been getting significantly worse since 2019. This assessment is as a result of the fourth annual audit by [Keep New Zealand Beautiful \(KNZB\)](#), a not-for-profit organisation that has been around since 1967. The greatest increase noted since 2019 has been litter from the roading network.

One could interpret this increase as a side-effect of the Covid-19 pandemic with a nationwide lockdown and consequent recovery, or maybe just the increased use of manufactured packaging associated with lifestyle changes in recent times. Whatever the driver, its probable cause is the sustained growth of a disposable society with a more casual approach to waste management by general public – particularly from moving vehicles.

The KNZB litter audit, which focuses on land areas, showed Porirua was the third highest littered area of the Wellington region. Porirua



### Feature Article ...cont.

City Council's own findings from litter audits undertaken at its beach monitoring sites (part of a national monitoring programme by Sustainable Coastlines) showed that our beaches had the highest litter counts in the country.

The quantities measured by KNZB over the time period 2019 – 2023 were nearly 37 thousand bits of material weighing over 200 kg. Top of the list of material found were unidentified hard and soft plastic items followed by food wrappers. Discarded food and drink containers from the fast-food sector are a large category, with the general public being a major contributor. However, significant amounts of discarded waste come from the retail sector, from building supply packaging and from construction and demolition. There are also items from road accidents that are not fully cleared up after these unfortunate events.

One point to bear in mind for Porirua is that a large concentration of litter is always found in and around the Paremata bridges. It is also of note that several individual volunteers regularly take the initiative to do their own gathering of the discarded material in this area. Together, these factors may make for an over or under-estimate of the litter problem. The particular concentration of litter in this area is due mainly to the effects of wind and water currents that help push floating material from several other areas into this one location. The concentration of litter here, however, is reflected in similar results for the other monitoring sites around the harbour.

Much of the pattern of waste is reflected in our annual Clean-Up of Pāuatahanui Inlet and this year's event was no exception. While we don't count every individual item collected to identify its material content, a large quantity of plastic waste, both soft and hard, is found in the rubbish bags of material gathered by our volunteers. Also, discarded takeaway cups, food packaging and bottles (both bodies and caps) turn up along the roadside and in the shoreline sediments. This year we also had some electronic components from a single location and, in the past, items like hypodermic syringes and needles have been discovered.

For the first time since this annual exercise has been running, we weighed the bags from each location as they were returned to the Browns Bay collection base and found that, in total, more than 115 kg of rubbish was collected. This is an interesting finding because, in the two hours that our clean-up took place, this litter total amounted to a figure more than half that of the KNZB litter audits over the 2019 – 2023 period. Some of the items however were very heavy in their own right: two tyres, three boxes of empty beer bottles and pieces of timber. So, while weight is an interesting statistic to measure, it is probably not as significant as the actual number of pieces collected as this is a more realistic reflection of the size of the litter problem.

Cigarette butts are an interesting problem. These are often overlooked by the GOPI Clean-up as they are small and not very obvious. However, a study in 2018 highlighted the litter problem that exists with cigarette butts. About 42% of smokers carelessly disposed of cigarette butts but, at the same time, claimed they never littered; and, while up to 70% of smokers discarded their butts in this way, most didn't believe that this was a problem because 'they were biodegradable'. Well, that's not at all true. Cigarette filters are made of plastic. Admittedly, it is a wood-based plastic called cellulose acetate and in biologically highly active soils it will decompose within a year. However, cigarette butts generally take many years to break down in the open. Also, when tossed away, they deposit into the surrounding environment not only the plastic but also the nicotine, heavy metals, and many other chemicals they've absorbed from the burnt tobacco. This chemical concoction is known to inhibit plant



### *Feature Article ...cont.*

growth and of course the butts routinely get into waterways and eventually the ocean.

In order to tackle the litter problem, all councils in the Wellington Region have developed a Wellington Region Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP). Within the plan, Porirua has its own local actions. Preparing a litter strategy and publicity campaigns to reduce litter in Porirua is one of the actions in the plan.

So, what can we all do to minimise waste which ends up as litter?

- Ditching the use of plastic bags and going back to the days when we used to take our own shopping bags to the grocery store (something that has now become the norm for most people in Porirua);
- Carrying our own coffee cups instead of buying the coffee with the supplied throw-away cup;
- Using a personal water bottle for refilling instead of buying a new bottle every time;
- Looking out for naturally derived cosmetics and skin-care products and choosing clothing made from natural fibres (eg. cotton) and selecting natural cleaning products such as bamboo scrubbing brushes instead of plastic sponges;
- Getting out there and picking up five pieces of litter every day;
- Finally, discarding ALL general waste in a bin, or items for recycling into the appropriate container.

In summary, therefore, this means **stop taking the casual approach** and, instead, always think about what we, as a whole, are doing when it comes to the material we no longer want to keep hold of. After all, most of us wouldn't drop our unwanted rubbish in and around our house and garden, so lets expand on that approach and treat the environment outside our homes as also part of our living quarters because, isn't that what it is anyway?

*For more information about waste and recycling in Porirua visit the Porirua City Council webpage:*

[Rubbish and Recycling.](#)



First, Human Impact.  
Too Much Rubbish: Greg Turner.

*Winner: Greg Turner (Human Impact). From the GOPI Photographic Competition of 2018.*

**Feature Article ...cont.**

*Peter Hunt: 'Plus Millions More'  
Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet Award for Best Challenges Photograph (2024)*



## PLEASE SIGN UP A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR

**S**ign up a neighbour, friend, or another family member. Just explain to them that membership numbers really count in giving us a strong voice to argue for what we all value about the Inlet.

On the back page of this newsletter is our Membership Form which can be filled in and emailed to us at [pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com). Also, you can forward this newsletter to someone else with just a note encouraging them to join.

Alternatively, you can visit our website where we have an on-line Membership Form which can be submitted directly from the site [gopi.org.nz/join-us](http://gopi.org.nz/join-us)

### **EMERGENCY NUMBERS FOR THE PĀUATAHANUI INLET**

**Pollution:** Discharges of contaminants to air, land, storm-water drains, streams, rivers or sea and for after hours consent enquiries: Greater Wellington Regional Council – 0800 496 734 (24 hours)

**Boating infringements:** Greater Wellington Regional Council – 384 5708 (24 hours)

**Illegal fishing activity:** Ministry for Primary Industries – 0800 476 224 (24 hours)

**Pāuatahanui Wildlife Reserve:** Department of Conservation – 0800 362 468

**Let us know what you have reported so we can keep an accurate record and follow up if necessary.**

**235 5052 (Chair, GOPI) or [pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com).**



# Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet

[www.gopi.org.nz](http://www.gopi.org.nz)  
[pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com)

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

To join the Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet you may pay your subscription in person or on line.

TO MAKE YOUR PAYMENT	NOTE
Pay your subscription at a bank branch, or on line, into our Westpac account: <b>03-1533-0009387-00</b> . When on line, use the 'Particulars', 'Code' and 'Reference' columns to write your <b>surname, initials</b> and the <b>period</b> of your sub (1-yr or 5-yr).	We do not have a postal address so please email all correspondence.  If you have something that cannot be delivered electronically please send a request by email and we will contact you to arrange collection.

Then fill in this form with all details.

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Email .....	Phone .....

Please put 'x' next to the subscription you are paying. (For electronic completion **HIGHLIGHT** the box and type a lower case 'x').

You can also make a donation. (We are a registered charity for tax purposes. Registration Number: CC47523).

One-year individual (\$12.00) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Five-year individual (\$50.00) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
One-year family (\$15.00) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Five-year family (\$60.00) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donation \$ .....	Do you require a receipt for your sub? <input type="checkbox"/>	or your donation? <input type="checkbox"/>	
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Date subs were paid .....			

We'd like to send you newsletters and notices via email. May we do this?

Please put 'x' in a box if you would like to take part in one or more of our activities.

Annual Clean Up day .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Submissions to local bodies .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Three-yearly cockle survey .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restoration Planting .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website and video clips .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now email the form to: [pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com)

*Thank you and welcome to the Guardians*