



The Inlet

Newsletter for Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet

DECEMBER

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

2024 is coming to a close.

It has been a turbulent year in many ways. From an environmental point of view the Government's initiatives and plans have, and will, impact deeply and adversely into community groups like ours, participating in resource plans and consents.

By the time this is published, the Fast Track Approvals legislation will probably be law. This allows infrastructure housing and development projects to be consented pretty much without any scrutiny from third-party groups such as ours and without most of the environmental safeguards in the current legislation.

Greater Wellington Regional Council is proceeding with hearings on its Natural Resources Plan. This contains many protections for water and catchment systems but its provisions may be watered down depending on further changes to freshwater policies and to the Resource Management Act.

Porirua City is proposing a bylaw to control freedom camping. We don't want any freedom camping around the Inlet. Despite freedom campers being required to have self-contained waste disposal systems, we don't think these are enough. In any case freedom camping often comes with associated litter problems. We will be making a submission on this and encourage you to do so if you want to. The item on page 5 has links to the council's information on this proposal and how to make a submission.

There are, however, some brighter events ahead for GOPI. We are partnering with the Porirua Harbour Trust to produce a new version of the acclaimed documentary series Living Waters. The article on page 4 tells you more about this.

Next year we have our annual Inlet Clean-up, scheduled for Sunday March 23rd, and near the end of the year, probably in November, we will have our triennial cockle count — the longest running community science project in New Zealand. We also have some planting projects lined up for Ivey Bay (see page 3).

In March we plan to have a Special General Meeting for two purposes:

1. To confirm a new Constitution which we are developing to conform to the new Incorporated Societies Act (see item on page 2); and



From the Chair cont...

2. To have a strategic session involving a stocktake of what we do and a forward-looking think about, and commitment toward, what we want to do in the years ahead.

We'll give you plenty of notice of the meeting and also some material to help you come up with ideas and proposals for GOPI's future.

As we approach 2025 I want to thank the Committee for its diligent work throughout this year and you, the members, for all your support.

Season's Greetings to you all.

Lindsay Gow

INCORPORATED SOCIETIES — a new Act and what it means for GOPI

The Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet (GOPI) is both a charity and an Incorporated Society. The Charities Act 2005 was amended in 2023 and will affect the way we conduct our finances. Steps have already been taken to comply with these changes and these were raised at our AGM earlier this year.

GOPI is also an incorporated society subject to the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. However, this Act has also been revised under new legislation that came into effect on 5 October 2023.

With this new legislation comes a requirement that any society carrying out its business under the 1908 Act, and wishing to continue, is required to re-register.

Given that a number of new rules on how societies must be governed are mandated by the Act, this gave us an opportunity to review our current constitution and bring it up to date in line with the new Act's requirements. The transition is well supported by the Incorporated Societies Register and its website, with guideline templates for rules and regulations provided.

Over the last couple of months, the Officers of GOPI have drafted and reviewed a new, compliant, Constitution. (A definition itemised in the Act is that members of the committee are referred to as '*officers*' of the society who are tasked with governing the way it works). One major change is a requirement that all members of an Incorporated Society must explicitly consent to being a member — though why you'd pay if you didn't consent, we're not sure! So, to comply with this rule, we have created a new Membership Form which is available to print out on the back page of the newsletter.

We are trying to make the process of getting the right information as painless as possible. If you pay your membership annually, you'll be asked to complete the new form when you renew. Don't worry — it's only a few lines but we are legally required to have your name and physical, or email, address on record. If you have taken out a 5-year membership, we'll be in touch to ask you to complete one of these new application forms, ensuring our records are compliant by the time we re-register. This is expected to be on 1 April 2025, the start of our next financial year.

We will be back in touch in January to give all members the opportunity to scrutinise our proposed new Constitution and offer feedback. Then, we will present the Constitution at a Special General Meeting in March so that registration under the new Act can take place at the end of March.

We look forward to working with everyone towards this objective and trust that you will be able to make yourself available for our March meeting.

We will confirm the date of this Special General Meeting in the new year.

Marg Glover

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT FUND GRANT

In September, GOPI took the opportunity to apply for funding from the 2024 round of Greater Wellington Regional Council's Community Environmental Funding.

A member's proposal, selecting the reserve area at Ivey Bay as an area for native vegetation restoration, was agreed upon by our Committee. This reserve, adjacent to the kindergarten, is one of the few remnant areas of bush on the southern edge of the Pāuatahanui Inlet and certainly worth preserving.

Although there are already a number of native plants in the reserve, there are also a significant number of invasive species, the most prominent of these being mature wattle, which continues to seed more and more young saplings. In addition, some areas are being smothered by *Tradescantia* and canary creeper (*Tropaeolum peregrinum*).



Working with Porirua City Council, the plan is to remove as many of the invasives as possible over the early part of 2025, followed by planting a selection of appropriate natives in the planting season, starting May 2025. Further work would continue over the next two years.

On 21st October, Andre van Halderen and Marg and Simon Glover, representing GOPI, and Baillie Graham with David Stone of PCC, met Jo Fagan from GWRC and Sharli-Jo Solomon from Ngāti Toa Rangatira to review the proposed project and discuss the logistics. The application was successful, and in November GOPI was awarded \$7,500 to be paid out over three years. This fund mainly covers the cost of nursery stock for planting. The original application of \$15,000 was reduced by \$7,500 as this component of the project has been taken on by PCC to cover removal of the wattle.

Possible community involvement includes a working party to assist PCC contractors to remove the large wattles and a team of workers employed to drag the felled wattles back along the beach to a mulcher located near the kindergarten. GOPI volunteers can also assist in pulling out by hand the young wattle saplings and to remove the invasive creepers from the site. Once that work has been completed we will be in a position to plant the new natives and follow a maintenance schedule to support them over the next few years while they become established.

GOPI wishes to thank GWRC, Ngāti Toa and PCC for their ongoing support and collaboration with the revegetation initiatives.

Hopefully we can inspire lots of volunteers who enjoy this tiny piece of bush, and the wildlife it brings to

Community Environment Fund Grant cont...

the area, to put in a couple of hours of time and stamp their mark on this environmental improvement.

Watch this space and your email inbox!

Andre van Halderen

NEW LIVING WATERS

You may be familiar with the original Living Waters, a 12-part series of short documentaries covering all aspects of Te Awarua o Porirua Harbour. The Living Waters series was produced in association with the then Pāuatahanui Inlet Community Trust, which later merged with GOPI once the Porirua Harbour Trust was established.

Living Waters was produced by Cheryl Cameron and was widely appreciated. It helped stimulate awareness and interest in the issues and problems affecting the Inlet and its catchments, and identifying opportunities that could help restore its degrading ecosystems. It was displayed at Pataka over many years and distributed via DVD to schools back in 2012. It formed the basis of an environmental education programme for nearly all the schools in the wider harbour catchment.

Cheryl and her son Cam Feast — both professional documentary film/video makers — are proposing a new and updated Living Waters. As with its predecessor, the New Living Waters will be a project that will again showcase Te Awarua o Porirua Harbour and its catchments.

Through a series of social media videos, the aim of New Living Waters is to increase local awareness and appreciation of the Harbour's unique estuarine system, and the threats it faces, and to encourage communities to take personal and collective action to protect it.

Social media clips are then to be re-packaged into educational modules that will be distributed to schools and other learning institutions, ideally with contributions from local schools and students.

This new series will use modern video technology to highlight the colour, diversity and beauty of the Harbour's flora and fauna and include underwater filming, macro photography and drone sequences. It will engage viewers by allowing them to enter the world of the Harbour's aquatic life and, by illustrating their challenges and individual roles within the complex food web, attach 'a voice' to their existence.

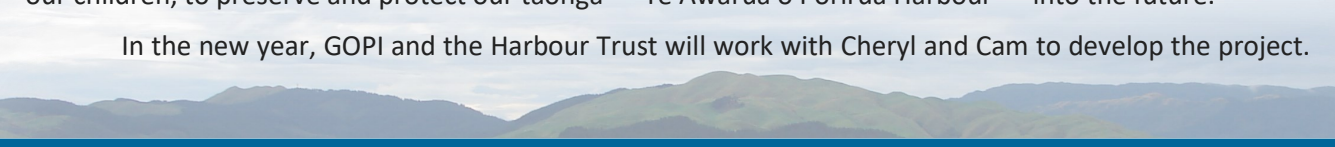
Importantly, we want the community to understand the fragility of the estuarine system and the fact that we play a big part in the preservation of its health and wellbeing. The negative impact that our communities place on this valuable ecosystem are huge and, sadly, hasn't reduced significantly since the original Living Waters highlighted its problems.

But while the challenges of overpopulation, pollution, deforestation and climate change are large, as a community we can mobilise and make a difference.

The New Living Waters series will illustrate how the local iwi, Ngāti Toa, and organisations like GOPI and the Harbour Trust, are already making a difference by combining cultural knowledge, community awareness and action, and science to protect and foster the Harbour and catchment environment into the future.

Most of all, the objective of New Living Waters is to educate and empower our community, and especially our children, to preserve and protect our taonga — Te Awarua o Porirua Harbour — into the future.

In the new year, GOPI and the Harbour Trust will work with Cheryl and Cam to develop the project.



New Living Waters cont...

We will seek support for its production and development. We are looking for partners in the project — both financial supporters as well as organisations and groups — who will help support it and, especially, build awareness of and action towards helping to restore Te Awarua o Porirua.

We will tell you more about this exciting and timely project in the new year and ways in which you can support and contribute to it.

Lindsay Gow, Cheryl Cameron, and Cam Feast

FREEDOM CAMPING

Porirua City Council, on its website, explains that: ‘Porirua City is a campervan and camping-friendly city’.

Freedom camping, as defined by the Department of Conservation, means to camp on public land outside of a formal campsite (on the side of a road, at a parking area, by the coast, etc.) using either a motor vehicle, tent, bivouac or another type of temporary structure.

Other than the formal campsite at Camp Elsdon, located at the entrance to the Colonial Knob Walkway, there are four locations in Porirua where freedom camping is permitted. These are at Ngāti Toa Domain, Onepoto Esplanade Reserve and two that directly concern GOPI: Bradeys Bay Park and Motukaraka Point Reserve. As the website states, this last location is ‘a beautiful spot to park overnight situated on the northern side of Pāuatahanui Inlet’. At the moment the Motukaraka Point freedom camping area is restricted to a maximum of three motorhome vehicles per night. All these locations require self-contained motorhomes.


But now, a change to the freedom camping rules in Porirua is being proposed by Porirua City Council. This proposal is to completely prohibit freedom camping in self-contained motor vehicles from using Motukaraka Point and allow, instead, 6 vehicles of 6 metres in length or less at the Camborne Walkway northern end car park.

The reasons for the proposal relate to the problems created by a small number of freedom campers who break the rules (sometimes leading to damage to the areas concerned and impacts on other visitors who use these areas) and the tools available to the council to fine those responsible for the infringements.

In reviewing the current issues with freedom camping in Porirua, PCC has considered all possible options that could be used as a countermeasure and identified three options for the future of freedom camping in the city. These are:

1. Maintain the status quo of managing freedom camping under the current Reserves Act and the Local Government Act;
2. Introduce a bylaw entirely under the Freedom Camping Act for *all* Council land;
3. Introduce a bylaw under the Freedom Camping Act for *non-reserve* land only.

No 3 is the recommended option.



Freedom Camping cont...

The question of whether this proposed bylaw is necessary was addressed by an assessment of the suitability of each site for freedom camping undertaken by *Thrive Spaces and Places*. PCC considers that this review, and the ongoing issues with freedom camping under the current rules, illustrates that a freedom camping bylaw is necessary, either to protect these specific areas of Porirua from damage, to protect the health and safety of visitors to these areas or to protect access to these areas.

A consultation document has been released by Porirua City Council that explains the reason for the proposal and provides details of the three above options as they are presented.

This document is available on our website at: <https://gopi.org.nz/current-affairs/>

We invite members of GOPI to put in a submission on this proposal if they feel it is important to them.

OUR WEBSITE STATISTICS

Our new website has been running now for two years and by all accounts it has been a successful venture — re-creating the old GOPI website from scratch.

Part of the new format which visitors to the site don't see is a month-long statistical running-summary of the activity that is recorded as visitors view the various pages of information that is the site's content. Checking in on this on a regular basis gives us an impression of what the on-line community regard as interesting and useful content. It can help us decide what additional pages to create, or just keep the most frequently viewed pages up-to-date.

We thought a good idea would be to give you, our newsletter readers, an idea of how this works, so here is an analysis of the last month's activity since mid November.

- Total visits to the site were 383 of which new visitors were 363.
- Those visitors viewed 462 pages altogether, including the home page.

The country of origin of those visitors makes for interesting reading.

- 174 were from New Zealand,
- 77 were from the United States,
- 45 from South Korea,
- 13 from Australia and, curiously,
- 18 were from Russia.
- The remainder were are not specified, being too small to be significant.

Peak activity occurred around 19 November with another peak on 4 December. More regular activity occurred on all other days.

Direct traffic — those visits that plugged in the website address directly — were 153 while those resulting from search engines were 216. Fourteen visits were from sites that made reference to our website.

And, while two thirds were from visitors on a standard computer, just over a third were from mobile phones.



Our Website Statistics cont...

Of particular interest were the pages visited by this traffic. Of course the lion's share was to the home page at 79, but from there visitors clicked on the following other pages with 10 or more visits:

Rig Shark:	39
Pukeko:	39
Cockles of the Inlet:	26
White-faced heron:	17
Saltmarsh:	13
Human History:	12
Fish of the Inlet:	11

These popular pages seem to be consistent from month to month.

Smaller numbers of visits looked at a range of other pages.

These stats were taken at mid-December and are a snapshot of the activity for that particular month. Viewing these statistics today, for instance, would give different results.

Whatever the period selected however, the picture it presents is very useful in determining how the website is being used and, over time, can highlight trends in the popularity of different pages and subject matter.

ON THE HORIZON


Inlet Clean-up 2025

Still a little way off, but worth putting in your diary, is the date of our next Inlet-wide annual clean-up exercise. This is where we invite anyone with a desire to see Pāuatahanui Inlet kept as clean and pristine as possible to come along at 10:30am with their gumboots to Browns Bay and join in the fun. A sausage sizzle is always an incentive, fired up towards the end of the morning to satisfy all hungry stomachs.

The date to remember:

Sunday 25 March.

This day has been chosen as the Sunday nearest low tide for the month and is normally held regardless of



On the horizon cont....

the weather. However, if the conditions are such that it is not sensible to continue we will postpone it for another day. This has only happened once in the history of the event.

The Clean-up has been posted on our website www.gopi.org.nz and this is where to go to check for any updates.

We hope to see you there.

Triennial Cockle Survey

Definitely not just around the corner but a little under a year from now, we will be undertaking the counting of cockles (*Austrovenus stutchburyi*) around the shores of Pāuatahanui Inlet — a three-yearly survey that is the longest running citizen science project in the country.

Planning for this event will begin in the new year and, again, details as they are formalised will be posted on our website.

PLEASE SIGN UP A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR

Sign 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. 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

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.



Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet

www.gopi.org.nz

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Join the Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet by either completing this form & emailing it (link below) or visiting our website (link above) and completing the on-line membership form.

Payment. Pay your subscription at a Bank branch or on line into our Westpac account.

Account name: **Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet** Account No: **03-1533-0009387-00.**

In the 'Particulars' and 'Reference' boxes, please write your surname and initials, and the period of your sub (1-yr or 5-yr).

Under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, it is a legal requirement for an Inc. Society to hold a consented application with name & contact details for ALL members. Please enter details below.

Name(s)*:

Address:

E-mail Address(es)*:

Phone No(s)*:

** For family membership please complete ALL names of those who wish to become members.*

Please put a [x] next to the subscription you are paying. We are also very grateful for donations. (We are a registered charity for tax purposes: registration number CC47523.)

One-year individual (\$12.00) [] Five-year individual (\$50.00)..... []

One-year family (\$15.00)..... [] Five-year family (\$60.00)..... []

Donation: \$ Do you require a receipt for your sub? [] or donation? []

Date subs paid: / / Bank Reference appears as:

We send out Newsletters (3 x pa) and Notices of activities to your email address.

Please put an '[X]' if you do not wish to receive: Newsletters [] Notices []

Please tell us which of our activities you would like to be part of.

Annual Clean-up day	[]	Submissions to local bodies	[]
Three-yearly cockle survey	[]	Educational programmes for schools	[]
Restoration planting & maintenance	[]	Website or Newsletter editing	[]
Other [] Please specify, e.g. committee		

PLEASE EMAIL to pauainlet@gmail.com

Return of this completed form/submission of our online form gives consent for all persons listed to be registered as members of Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet Incorporated.

THANK YOU AND WELCOME!