

MINUTES

THE ROSS LOCAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE READING ROOM, ROSS, ON TUESDAY 1st AUGUST 2023, COMMENCING AT 11.10AM.

1 PRESENT

Arthur Thorpe (Chairperson), Christine Robinson, Sally Langridge, Julie Smith, Michael Smith, Ann Thorpe (Hon Secretary).

2 IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Alison Andrews, Councillor Paul Terrett, Councillor Richard Archer.

3 APOLOGIES

Mayor Mary Knowles OAM, Helen Davies, Jill Bennett, 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 July, 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

Christine Robinson / Sally Langridge

6 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 Closure Of High Street Pedestrian Rail Crossing

NMC has agreed to apply to TasRail for a license to build a new, legally compliant crossing. \$60,000 has been allocated in the 2023/2024 budget for the construction of this crossing.

No further update at this time, however Chair thanked NMC Councillors for their support with this village project.

Matter ongoing.

6.2 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.

Update requested from Council 24.7.23. Chair recently met with Works Manager, and asked that the priority item mentioned be repaired as soon as possible.

Matter ongoing.

6.3 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

This matter raised with NMC a number of times, and Jonathon Galbraith (NMC Engineer) has been in touch with TasRail several times. To date, TasRail has not yet responded to Council’s request for the chicane to be reinstated.

Matter ongoing.

6.4 Review Of Local District Committee Structure

Council has agreed to extend the terms of appointments of all LDC’s and Forums until December 2023, while the Local District Committee structure review is being undertaken.

The review will examine the LDC’s role and function, membership, meeting times, funding and communication with the local community.

Cr Terrett kindly advised that the governance area of NMC is currently working on this item. Council feel that having input / comments from all local committees is ideal and will take on board their input. Any changes should come from the committees.

The important “*Future of Local Government*” review has unfortunately pushed this project into some delay. It is hopeful that the updated committee/forum review will be presented to council before the end of December, but unfortunately, this is not a definite. There may need to be an extension of current positions, however this not written in stone as it will depend on a number of issues, including legality. Chair mentioned that extending the terms of appointments another 6 months from December, would bring membership periods back into line with usual timeframe, i.e. end of June 2024.

There was some general discussion and the very important issue of communication both to and from committees was mentioned, with some groups looking at ways to improve this, i.e. noticeboards, newsletters, etc.

Matter ongoing.

6.5 Future Of Local Government Review

The Local Government Board is developing a package of reforms to improve the way Tasmanian councils work for their communities into the future, and a report has been released by the Tasmanian State Government that proposes serious changes to the Northern Midlands Council (NMC).

Premier Rockliff has announced that there will be no forced Council mergers, however the Northern Midlands Council has asked residents to still make submissions and complete surveys/interviews etc, so that Council may gauge community opinion in relation to mergers.

Frustration has been felt from all areas of councils and the public. There has been a lack of communication as not everyone was aware of what the issues were and why amalgamations were sought. Although NMC has asked the state government to retain the status quo, with NO changes, there are some councils that may seek amalgamation. NMC already share some operational aspects with Meander Valley Council which works well.

Councillors feel the fight is not yet over. Forced amalgamations are only one part; another part appears to be that some important planning issues would be taken over by state government, which will be impactful to not only councils but to all their ratepayers.

Next week a number of hearings will be held in various locations for the whole of Tasmania Local Government Review, even though the government stated “no forced amalgamations”.

7 NEW BUSINESS

Arthur Thorpe

- Village Green capping stones not able to be repaired under warranty. Unfortunately the builder has gone out of business. NMC will conduct the repairs. Chair felt there were Health & Safety issues, as the capping stones can be tipped over which is quite dangerous.
- Off Lead Dog Park advisory sign at Village Green, Council will give more thought to this issue, however are waiting for the appointment of a new Animal Control Officer. Part of this will be the review of all signs at all of Councils off-lead dog exercise areas.
- Village Green Christmas Tree; Works Manager is happy to purchase a Christmas tree and discussion was held regarding his suggestion of choice of tree. Also discussed power to the tree, vandalism etc. Christine Robinson to contact Ross Arborist Fiona Doe for her input on choice of tree.

- NMC has already fertilised street garden boxes and beds.
- Supper room water damage not apparent, however Chair and Sally Langridge to have a look after the meeting to source issue. May be in the wall itself as there appears to be no apparent damage.
- Weed killer around the bollards; staff will be advised not to be so heavy handed in future, and NMC will over sow the bare earth when weather is suitable.
- Cement bollards will be replaced where necessary. Council make their own, so they are readily available.
- Road edge maintenance looked at and discussed; staff will look at this as a regular ongoing maintenance issue, with the public also able to request repairs through Council's on-line Customer Request system.
- Gravel at the old quarry; as this will be used around the village in the near future there is no point in moving it in the interim, and an inspection of the area revealed that there is more than enough parking for all types of vehicles.
- Chair toured all village streets and only a couple of very small Gorse patches found near the entry to the Old Burial Ground at the top of Park Street. Perhaps NMC staff can lop these small bushes off and the large mower will cut back again later in the year. Some gorse has been noted as growing through from private land which council can't spray, and which is the responsibility of the land owners concerned, not the Council.
- Chair clarified that the dog trough at the dog park was not stolen as originally reported, and has now been permanently re-installed.
- All roads that were recently resealed have now had their intersections re-marked. Thanks to Council's Jonathan Galbraith for his prompt attention to this matter.
- The sandbags placed by the SES around the base of the Caravan Park accommodation block, have now been removed.

Ann Thorpe

- Asked on behalf of another community group for any further information on the proposed Community Garden at the Men's / She Shed. Advised it was only conceptual at this point.

C Robinson

- Water leak from Councils nature strip watering system outside the Man-O-Ross is still happening. Infrastructure is very old and would appear to be unrepairable. Chair to contact Works Manager and asked for it to be shut off permanently.

8 NEXT MEETING/CLOSURE

The Chair closed the meeting at 11:50am.

Next meeting – Tuesday 5th September 2023 commencing 11.15am in the Ross Reading Room.