**Minutes for Warkworth Area Liaison Group**

**Date:** 5th August 2020

**Meeting Opened:** 7:30 pm

**Chairperson:** Hueline Massey

**Attendees:**  29 People

**Apologies:** Marja Lubeck, Murray Chapman, Richard Papworth

**Guest speakers; Karsten Stevenson- Key Relationship Manager, and Karen Brown Manager of the Northern Connection, from NX2**

* Karsten told the meeting that they are three years into what is now a five and a half year project. The lockdown for Covid 19 has added the extra six months. The contract partners building the motorway will not receive any payments for the job until the road opens to the public. They will then receive staged payments over the next twenty five years.
* Karsten gave a summary of how the project had developed so far. It started with the relocation of all the native animal species that were living in the path of the earthworks. Everything from bats to freshwater mussels, kauri snails, geckos, freshwater crayfish and whitebait were caught and released in a predator free area.
* There is still constant vigilance and cleaning taking place to avoid transmission of kauri dieback. This has so far been successful with no cases reported in the area to date.
* Extensive sediment control was implemented right from the start and continues to be highly prioritized. Pine forest in the construction zone was cleared and was mature enough for a market to be found for the logs. Only the bare minimum of native trees was removed.
* Once the area was cleared all the big machinery was brought in for the extensive earthworks that were required. Diggers that are capable of holding a standard truckload (6m3) of soil with one scoop, and huge sixty tonne trucks have been working ever since. 8.2 million cubic metres of spoil have been shifted so far, with at least another million cubic metres still to go. Big advances in drone photography have allowed detailed and very accurate examination of the earthworks process. By taking thousands of photographs over the excavated area contractors are able to construct three-dimensional models that can ascertain the exact amount of spoil removed over any particular period of time.
* The seven major bridges that are on the route are all well underway, as are a lot of the culverts. There is a major culvert being constructed near where the motorway route crosses Woodcocks road. A bank of eleven 2.4 metre diameter concrete culverts run under the motorway at this point to cope with floodwater build-up during high rainfall periods. This is thought to be the biggest such culvert structure in the southern hemisphere. Baffles along the lengths of all the culverts allow fish to easily move through them. Other areas of wetland will be formed where needed.
* Karsten suggested that we look at the website [www.nx2group.com](http://www.nx2group.com) to view the latest drone flyover video and also footage of some of the blasting.
* Karen then explained how things were progressing with the formation of the roundabout for the connection to the current SH1 at the northern end of the motorway, between Kaipara Flats Rd and Hudson Road. Trees have been removed and earthworks started. Barriers have been set-up to allow the road building to begin while traffic flow is maintained. The length of the current highway that will be reconfigured will be reduced to a single lane each way for the period of construction.
* There are a lot of drains and utilities to be laid and this work is also underway. The roundabout itself will be just to the west of the current highway in the vicinity of where the weigh-station is now. The roundabout will have one road off it continuing SH1 north and another road heading back towards Warkworth. Just south of the roundabout there will be an intersection formed ready for the Matakana Link Rd. The beginning of this road will be formed as part of NX2’s scope of work, and Auckland Transport will be connecting on to this later.
* The Asset Maintenance and Management building will be constructed near to the roundabout and this will house the office for the on-going administration of the motorway.
* Planting is already underway along the project with 9000 plants being planted per day. By the end of the project there will be a million new plants over the whole 240 hectares.

**Local Board report- Local board chair Phelan Pirrie and deputy chair Beth Houlbrooke**

* Phelan told the meeting of the good working relationship he had with Beth. He was her deputy during the last Local Board term, and now she is his deputy for this term.
* The Local Board has been busy all year preparing the Local Board Plan for the next three years. They have also been sorting out the annual budget. The lockdown for Covid 19 meant that all this work was condensed into an even tighter time-frame than normal.
* The Council’s difficult financial situation brought on by Covid 19 has meant that there have been cuts imposed on the Local Board budget. However with the recent 3.5% rates increase having been ratified the required cuts haven’t been as severe as was feared. There will be no cuts to the Local Board’s discretionary budget of $1.8million, but the budget for capital projects has been cut. This means that while capital works that have already started, or in the process of starting will continue, a lot of the proposed capital works will be deferred.
* The tight monetary situation has meant that it is even more important that people push for work they want to be included in the budget. If things don’t get included in the budget then they won’t get done. There is going to be big competition for projects to be included in the budget so make sure the ones you think must be done are chosen.
* Phelan pointed out that Warkworth has a planning gap because the recent Structure Plan does not relate to the Warkworth CBD. Phelan has had experience with developing a Town Centre Plan for Huapai and is stressing how beneficial it has been, and how helpful getting one for Warkworth would be. A Centre Plan gives everyone a reference point from which to base decisions on. Town development ideas can be looked at in relation to how they will fit into the overall plan. Likewise a Centre Plan can advise infrastructure and utility decisions. This will prove especially important with the huge growth expected for our area.
* Phelan and Beth both urged as many people as possible to put in submissions supporting development of a Town Centre Plan for Warkworth. If there’s a big stack of submissions pushing for a Centre Plan the powers-that-be won’t be able to ignore them. Remember to indicate your other priority projects too. To give your feedback and make submissions just Google ‘Ak have your say’.
* Sue Robertson asked Beth about the possibility of getting a Citizens Advice Bureau opened in Warkworth. This created discussion around how an earlier Citizens Advice Bureau in Warkworth closed through low numbers using it. But it was pointed out that the times are different now and with population expected to increase, and possible difficult times ahead, the need will be there. The consensus was that there would very likely be suitable Council owned premises available somewhere in the CBD handy to transport that could house the CAB.

**Auckland Councilor Greg Sayers**

* Firstly, Greg said he wanted to commend the working relationship Beth and Phelan have.
* Greg wanted to acknowledge his pleasure that the Government has allocated $100million towards cleaning up the Kaipara Harbour. Auckland Council has swung in behind this initiative, and has contributed a further $10million. Auckland Council will be working in with the other local councils around the harbour to do the work, and they are hopeful that these other councils will chip in more money. Degradation of the Kaipara Harbour through deforestation, farm run-off, etc has been going on for many years and will take a lot of effort to turn around. The work is expected to create up to 200 jobs.

**One Warkworth Business Association (Dave Stott)**

* Dave reported that on the 4th August a group comprising himself, Roger Williams, Martin Dancy and Greg Sayers met with representatives from Auckland Transport about the proposed Sandspit Link Rd. Dave and the group showed the AT reps a possible route for the Link Rd that had not been previously considered. This was looked on very favourably so it’ll be interesting to see what route is eventually chosen. AT will be working on a feasibility plan and a business plan should be produced in 2022, followed by notices of requirement, etc. Construction isn’t likely before 2028. There would be 6 landowners involved if this route is chosen, and all are keen on it going ahead.
* A group from One Warkworth met with NZTA and AT on 6th August about the Warkworth – Te Hana leg of the motorway. They will get a report at the next WALG meeting.
* The Mahurangi Employment Expo is to be held on Wednesday 26th August from 6pm – 9pm. Local businesses and ITOs will be present for job-seekers to learn what local job opportunities are available. This is mainly aimed at school leavers from Mahurangi College but other job seekers may want to take advantage of this too.
* The One Warkworth AGM is scheduled for 5-30 on the 9th September at the Back Bar of the Bridgehouse. This will be the first AGM since Warkworth’s BID application was accepted. Chris Murphy will be standing down as One Warkworth’s chairman, and some other committee members will be standing down from the committee.
* Key dates coming up are; The Huge Day Out on the 18th October; The Great Debate on the 24th October; The Santa Parade on the 6th December.

**General Business**

* Dave Stott told the meeting that the Oaks on Neville is scheduled to be completed on the 28th August and the Hotel is due to open on the 1st October..
* Hueline wanted to thank Peter Buckton on our behalf for getting the Warkworth town clock going.
* Hueline read out an email we had received from Martin Dancy and Allison Roe seeking interested persons to attend a presentation from their group on the significant progress they are making in linking Puhoi to Mangawhai via Warkworth and Matakana, and local pathways to join this arterial walking/cycling route along the way. This is not intended as an open meeting, but rather they are looking for 20 or so enthusiastic people who will become involved with the Greenways Plan. If this sounds like it might be you, email me back and I’ll put you in contact with Martin. Some members of our group have already expressed interest.
* The group was asked whether they would be interested in a presentation by a representative from Kiwirail about its future plans for Northland. Ian Lewis revealed his interest in Kiwirails plans and gave us a bit of information on what he understood they are doing. He has since supplied the following figures;

Remedial work was started in Sept 2019

54Km of the 181Km line will be upgraded or replaced.

50,000 sleepers replaced

50,000 cu m of ballast added

5 of the 88 bridges replaced with concrete structures

Repairs to 13 tunnels

Drains and culverts cleared  - many culverts to be replaced

Stabilise embankments

Vegetation control.

Whangarei Rail Yard improvements

Below ground conditions in the tunnels to be investigated preparatory to later work to lower the tunnel floors to accomodate the larger shipping containers

Source: Railscene News. Sept 2019

The line had been in “managed decline” under the previous govt and was expected to close in 5 years.

The new link to the Whangarei Port is not part of this project, but it is underway with land designations etc.

* It seems like there would be enough local interest in what Kiwirail is doing so we will attempt to get them along to speak at a future meeting.

**Meeting Closed:** 8-25 pm. Next meeting is on September 2nd at 7-00pm