

Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance

Ordinary Meeting

MINUTES

Tuesday 17 March, 6-8pm

Committee Room, Lake Macquarie City Council Administration Building, Speers Point



Present:	Christine Aus, Steve Dewar, Norbert Lica, Avril Lockton, Jean McGarry, Colin Mondy, Dot Seiffert Rachelle McConville (LMCC)
Apologies:	Susan Denholm (leave)

1 Welcome & acknowledgement of Country

ACTION: Rachelle to include the words on the agenda for next time.

2 Apologies

Susan D (On leave)

3 Conflict of interest

None advised.

4 Special agenda item – Alliance Board meetings, structure and procedures

See discussion paper, attached. Discussion about proposed new meeting protocols. Main purpose is to have more time for discussing more strategic matters to be able to fulfil the objectives of the Alliance, and better support the SN network.

General support for new approach – especially for collating ‘background papers’ including report backs, items for discussion and requests from member groups, and distributing to Board members a week in advance of the meetings. Noted that this approach relies on (a) receiving report backs early, and (b) board members reading the background papers in advance of the meeting. Also noted that last minute items are still likely to come up, and that is ok.

RECOMMENDATION: Review and agree upon more effective meeting protocols and procedures.

Recommendation accepted. Utilise the protocols outlined for future meetings.

5 Previous meeting

5.1 Ordinary meeting minutes, 17 February 2015 as circulated

MOTION: That the previous meeting minutes dated 17 February 2015, be confirmed as an accurate record.

Update – Christine was present from about 7.00pm.

Moved: Steve.

Seconded: Norbert

Passed unanimously.

5.2 Business arising from the minutes

- Rachelle noted that she still needs to investigate how we might help SN groups meet requirements for first aid qualifications.
- Still seeking assistance from an accountant to audit the Alliance's accounts. Have emailed Huw Thomas a couple of times, but haven't heard back. **ACTION: Steve to contact Huw.**

6 Correspondence

- Alliance thank you letters sent to Australia Day Award recipients. 19 February
- Request from University of Newcastle seeking research participants – sent to Sustainable Neighbourhood key contacts, 24 February
- Information from Relationships Australia about becoming a 'Very Neighbourly Organisation' (see discussion point 8.1), 27 February

7 Treasurers report

See report attached.

- Jean updated the entry for Redhead Sustainable Neighbourhood Group (Not C Mondy personally).
- Also note that Colin is expecting an incoming invoice from NPWS for their involvement at the Surfest event. This will need to be paid to reconcile the project and Council grant for that event.

8 For discussion & decision

8.1 Becoming a 'Very Neighbourly Organisation'

Some background:

Neighbour Day is an event run by Relationships Australia that aims to:

- Strengthen communities and build better relationships with the people who live around us.
- Create safer, healthier and more vibrant suburbs and towns.
- Promote tolerance, respect and understanding.
- Break down community barriers.
- Protect the elderly, the vulnerable and the disadvantaged.

Their website indicates a list of 'Very Neighbourhood Organisations' which have a strong values match to the five principal aims of Neighbour Day. They are community organisations, or business groups, or government organisations which:

- Have significant networks of community minded members who are actively involved in local activities.
- Believe in the importance of social connection and resilient communities.
- Are able to support the Neighbour Day message and campaign activities
- Can help us grow the Neighbour Day ethos beyond a single day, to being kind and caring about your local community every day of the year.

Aligning the Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance with Neighbour Day would benefit our brand and be an avenue for increased recognition of the Sustainable Neighbourhood program. Our logo, short description and web link would appear on their website.

In return, we would be agreeing to promote the Neighbour Day event and message to our members, which is something that is consistent with the ethos of Sustainable Neighbourhoods.

Proposal: That the Alliance proceeds to engage with Relationships Australia to become a 'Very Neighbourly Organisation', and to help promote Neighbour Day.

Discussion centred around the meaningful implication of being a VNO. Promotional opportunity for both organisations. Alliance can encourage local SNGs to have an event or other project that would support the aims of neighbour day.

Move: Steve

Second: Colin

Passed unanimously.

9 Requests from member groups

[List any risk assessments, grant applications or other requests that require approval]

9.1 Grant application – West Wallsend District SNG – Dob in a Dumper Awareness Campaign

Approved via email with some minor amendments. Submitted to Council Monday 16 March.

Noted Colin's comments about additional issue of 'social dumping', that is particularly prevalent in Redhead (and we assume other areas of the city).

9.2 Grant application – Greater Charlestown SNG – National Tree Day Native Tree Planting

Approved via email with note that issues related to managing a tree planting project on Council land are resolved prior to accepting a grant offer. Submitted to Council Monday 16 March.

Rachelle noted the importance of resolving the range of health and safety issues raised by this project, as the Alliance currently does not have the capacity to manage (eg in terms of providing adequate training, equipment and risk management protocols for a tree planting activity). Rachelle is currently seeking support from other Council staff that might enable the Alliance to safely and effectively manage the project. Acceptance of a successful grant offer will be dependent on confirmation of that support.

9.3 Grant application – Dudley SNG - Dudley Community Nature Play Project

Approved via email with minor amendments. Submitted to Council Monday 16 March.

Good to be utilising the Awabakal EEC, and support for an interesting and different project.

9.4 LT Creek Responsible Cat Care Brochure – Final grant report and acquittal

Draft grant acquittal report circulated via email this afternoon. Suggestion to include actual in-kind contributions from group, which we assume are significant. Eg volunteer time to letterbox etc.

The final report template (from Council) doesn't ask for these calculations. Board members suggested that the template should be updated, to reflect the same level of budget detail as in the original grant applications.

ACTION: Members can provide further comment on the LT Creek report via email by 23 March. Rachelle to submit to Council for 31 March 2015.

9.5 Dudley community garden – equipment grant

The group has been granted another extension for their grant project to 30 September 2015. The group have now established their governance arrangements with Council, as an operating committee, which gives them permission to utilise the piece of Council land, and a risk management framework etc. This process has taken much longer than expected. They are now able to start using the grant funds to purchase equipment and materials to start building the garden beds.

10 Current project updates

[List current projects, and the latest progress on them. Please read these beforehand, and then we only need to note any particular points of interest or concern at the meeting.]

10.1 High School Education Project (Steve, Chris, Colin and Jean)

Steve addressed Warners Bay High School assembly on 23 Feb, also the Toronto High school assembly in early March. The students were receptive and the Principal supported Steve's talk by following up talking about the relevance of the issue within and outside of the school. Steve was invited back to speak with Geography classes at Toronto High when they are doing relevant units of work.

Steve is planning to visit Morisset, Lake Macquarie High (Booragul), Belmont and Swansea over the next month or so.

ACTION: Steve will contact each of the relevant Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups in those areas to see how they might like to be involved as well.

Greater Charlestown SNG are looking at a possible project with Whitebridge High School and the Eastlake Youth Centre as part of their "Walk on the positive side" program.

Greater Charlestown SNG are also planning to make further contact with St Mary's (Gateshead) and possibly Hunter Sports High. Jean also volunteered to be involved, and will liaise with the other group members.

10.2 Reducing litter from Maccas (Steve)

Steve spoke with a senior franchise representative for the 4 Westlake Macdonalds outlets, to progress work together to cut down on litter. Maccas suggest that we try to get a grant to put up permanent signage at the drive thrus to discourage littering. Could be a suitable project for a Clubs Grant.

Steve and Maccas agreed that it was not suitable to hand litter bags out to customers, as they already had a paper bag as part of their purchase.

10.3 Sponsorship proposal (Steve and Colin)

Steve has approached [Solar Power Australia](#) (in Warners Bay), and received a positive initial response. The sponsorship proposal has been slightly amended to highlight what we can offer them, and Steve delivered it directly to them on Friday.

ACTION: Rachelle will also email the proposal through to them.

10.4 Alliance representative on Council Grants Committee (Jean)

Rachelle has not received a response yet, on whether the grants criteria has been updated regarding committee feedback from the last round.

10.5 Planning / research for possible citywide transport forum (Rachelle)

Report back from Rachelle: Received advice that Council's budget and forward works as far as cycleways are concerned are pretty much set for the next few years, through the Cycleway Strategy. A possible avenue for community groups to have other projects prioritised is to advocate to the State Government to contribute the funding for particular projects.

Still requires further investigation of options about how the Alliance can effectively assist to address transport issues in the city.

Some discussion to try and define the purpose for a transport forum. Ideas included:

Some expert speakers, eg:

- Newcastle cycleways
 - Speaker from Council – what is the city's vision for cycleways / transport?
 - Charlestown to the coast speakers
 - TASNG members
 - Tom Roberts
- ➔ Aiming to influence Council to change cycleways strategy? (current strategy & process of development is flawed, and needs to be re-done. Limited community input.)
- ➔ Focus? Transport / just cycleways / footpaths / ???

Resolution to discuss in more detail at next month's meeting.

ACTION: Christine will develop a discussion paper to provide some focus for next month's meeting.

11 Report backs from member groups

[List member group events from previous month, including participation numbers, any feedback or points of interest, and any lessons learned. Please read these beforehand, and then we only need to note any particular points of interest or concern at the meeting.]

11.1 Council's Cycling Advisory Group (Christine)

Christine has received advice that the meeting agendas / minutes and meeting times etc for Council's Cycling Advisory Group (CAG) are not available publicly, as they are a technical advisory committee of Council. Any recommendations from the CAG come through a Council report through Council's monthly business paper, and then becomes a public document.

This is not helpful for the Greater Charlestown group to find out what the recommendations of that committee have been so far, or to find out why Council is not meeting its targets in relation to cycleways (as stated in Council's Annual report). Advice from Rachele is that Councillors sit on the CAG, and are able to raise community concerns to the committee.

ACTION: Christine will approach Councillors on behalf of the GCSNG, regarding the Cycling Advisory Group's meeting frequency; What has been their advice to Council so far?; and Why is Council not meeting their targets?

11.2 Clean Up Australia Day, 1 March

60 Clean up sites around the city, and >5000 volunteers. 6.1 tonnes of rubbish collected.

11.3 Cardiff Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Workshop, 3 March

15 people attended, including 2 Councillors. Chelsey from the Greater Charlestown SNG attended and did a great job of talking about her experience of the SN program, along with Jenny from the Afton Close Landcare Group.

Major themes that arose were based around protecting local bushland, public transport, waste & litter, and improving the local streetscape. Participants were enthusiastic and will have their first meeting in April.

11.4 Redhead SNG and Landcare use of powertools (Colin)

Redhead SNG is still waiting for Council to provide adequate response about Landcare volunteers using motorised equipment.

Steve also followed up with Jason Harvey from Landcare: Jason reiterated that Landcare's objectives do not include clearing land for amenity's sake. Landcare's previous suggestion was for the group to plant lomandras or other suitable natives along the pathway edges, so that it would no longer require the same intensity of maintenance. Jason also suggested that it would be possible to get Council to maintain the area more regularly than they have already indicated.

Colin received a response from Council in March, that stated:

- The issue is complex and not yet resolved. Staff are seeking advice from Council's legal department.
- Council does not have the resources to support the use of motorised equipment by Landcare volunteers, as would be required by WHS legislation.
- Council has researched with other councils and lake mac has a similar policy wrt power tools.
- There is no indication that the restrictions on using power tools has led to a decline in Landcare volunteers across the city.

Redhead SNG are investigating other ways that the community may be able to have care and control over the walkway area, so that they can maintain it. (Eg perhaps as an operating committee of Council and/or through the Men's Shed.)

11.5 Redhead WW1 Centenary Project, December 2014 – present (Colin)

All running well. Local artist set up to do one wall, and kids will do another. First wall being painted in late February / early March.

Paint on the walls last weekend, plaques being designed.

11.6 Southlake Eco Health Expo, planning for June 2015 (Norbert)

Updated date 28 June - TBC. Currently confirming speakers and venue, and preparing a project plan. Also hoping to apply for a grant from Local Land Services, and a grant from Council (Community Funding Program).

Clean up with Morisset High School students – planned for the Saturday before. Utilise the rubbish collected to inspire some action (eg Take 3).

Council grant application (Community Funding Program) – need to get draft grant application asap. The Board will need to receive the draft application by Thursday 19 March to have time to review it before the submission deadline of Mon 23 March.

11.7 Blacksmiths Beach Dune Rehabilitation, Autumn 2015 (Rachelle)

Pelican Area SNG are working with Council and Landcare revegetate the dune system around Blacksmiths Beach. SNG are mainly helping to promote and get locals involved (and participate themselves). Planting days scheduled for early June (One for schools, and one for community.)

11.8 Pelican Area Drain Audit, (Norbert)

Need to follow up with them to show recognition from the Alliance, and to enquire about their progress.

11.9 4WDs on Redhead Beach (Colin)

Redhead SNG plan to make a submission to Council in relation to 4WD access on the beach. Will propose for Council to organise stakeholder forum to come up with proposal to address various issues and strong public resentment.

11.10 Energy saving and auditing kits from OEH (Norbert)

Norbert reported that he followed up with Fiona Lewis recently. They don't have any energy saving kits left, but that they do have lots of show bags that they might be able to offer... On the proviso that they are given to low income households.

Some questions remain about what OEH's expectation would be for the Alliance to target / identify low income individuals to give the show bags to, and how that would need to be demonstrated.

ACTION: Rachelle to liaise with Council staff to follow up.

11.11 Community Pathway project idea in Toronto (Steve)

TASNG are looking at a way to complete a gap in pathway, by seeking funding through the NRMA Community Grants, and working with Council to construct a pathway of a few hundred metres. Possibly through the Coal Point Progress Association. NRMA grants are due 31 March.

11.12 Trail Bike Education (Steve)

The TASNG and Coal Point Progress Association are also looking at an education project to target trail bike riders and encourage them to stay on the paths.

12 General business

- Steve suggested that Council could run an awareness campaign about the proper disposal of dog poo bags.

13 For information only

- Alliance website activity for February: 4430 pageviews and 611 unique visitors.

14 Next meeting date: Tuesday 21 April, 6-8pm

15 Meeting close

Attachment – Treasurer’s Report

LAKE MACQUARIE SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS ALLIANCE

GENERAL MEETING

17 March, 2015

TREASURER’S REPORT

1 February 2015 to 28 February, 2015



Account 06 2806 10352969 with Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Charlestown Branch.

Balance \$ 6,372.56

RECEIPTS

Interest Credit	0.04c
Redhead SNG	205.90
Bicycle Network	120.00
Total Receipts	\$ 6,698.50

EXPENDITURE

Chq 000029 RSNG-Printing	200.00
Chq 000030 Milkcrate Events	1,000.00
Total Expenditure	\$ 1,200.00

BALANCE \$ 5,498.50

This is a true statement of accounts for the Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhoods Alliance for the period ended 28 February, 2015.

Signed _____

Name Jean McGarry

Title HON TREASURER

Date 17 March 2015.

NB: Chq 000031 17/02/15 \$380.90 unrepresented.