

1. Attendance and Apologies

Members:

Cr Ben Smith (Chair)
Cr David Wright (Mayor)
Cr Eoin Johnston (via Zoom)

Jane Gardiner - Alstonville Plateau Historical Society (via Zoom)
Pat Carney - Wardell Progress Association
Mary Birch - Wollongbar Progress Association (via Zoom)
Russell Priddle - Alstonville FC

Council Staff:

Matt Wood – Director Planning and Environmental Health Division
Janelle Snellgrove - Executive Support Officer

Others in Attendance:

Nil.

Apologies

Cr Sharon Parry
Des Burke – Alstonville Lions
Barry Jeffress - Secretary Tuckombil Landcare
Jim Hahn - Probus Club of Alstonville
Steve Miller - Rous Mill Ratepayers Association
Wayne Garrard - Alstonville & District Cricket Association
Malcolm Johnson - Ballina Environment Society

Recommendation:

That the apologies be accepted (Eoin Johnston / Mary Birch)

2. Guests

Nil.

3. Declarations of Interest

Nil.

4. Confirmation of Minutes 12 November 2020

Recommendation:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2020 be accepted as a true and correct record (Pat Carney / Mary Birch).

5. Outstanding Business – 12 November 2020

a) **Snipe Bird Migration**

Jane Gardiner advised that a migratory bird species (a type of Snipe) has been observed in wetlands between Gap Road and Teven Road. This appears to be a resting site for the birds which migrate from Asia. It was suggested this could be the largest site in NSW (possibly Australia). Jane has suggested Council to contact relevant bird groups as this is a very significant site.

The information contained in the agenda was noted.

6. Business with Notice from Members

a) **Alstonville Cultural Centre Update**

Jane Gardiner requested an update on the Alstonville Cultural Centre in regards to contracts, income and centre upgrades planned for 2023.

Staff Comment

The licence agreement with Byron Studios took effect from 1 December 2020. The licence agreement is for a two year period.

Byron Studios are required to pay a passive rate of \$375 per week whilst the premises is not in use and \$750 per week whilst the premises is occupied and a movie is in progress.

Under the licence agreement, the first three months rent is deferred for payment until early 2022.

Byron Studios have secured a film production with the sets currently being completed. The filming will commence this month.

Concept plans for the redevelopment of Alstonville Culture Centre have been endorsed by Council. Council is in the process of sourcing quotations for the preparation of the detailed design plans for Alstonville Cultural Centre redevelopment.

Once these plans are completed, Council will then proceed with obtaining the relevant planning approvals to enable the ability to then apply for grant funding for the redevelopment works.

The information contained in the agenda was noted.

b) **Tree Replacement – Old Council Chambers**

Jane Gardiner requested an update on the tree replacement planned at the Old Council Chambers, High Street Alstonville.

Staff Comment

Replacement trees have been ordered and awaiting installation which is expected shortly.

The information contained in the agenda was noted.

c) **Vegetation Removal – Ocean View Drive, Alstonville**

Jane Gardiner thanked Council for removing the vine on Ocean View Drive, Alstonville.

Action: Referred to Open Spaces

The Mayor raised a concern about vines on trees at the bottom of the cutting.

Action: Referred to Open Spaces

d) **4WD Access Signage**

Pat Carney would like Council to erect "No 4WD Beach Access" signs on Patches Beach Road and Sneesbys Lane. This was discussed at Wardell Progress meeting.

Matt Wood advised consideration can be given to signage once Crown Lands has determined its approach to beach access overall.

Post Meeting Update:

Crown Lands announced on 25 March that access to South Ballina Beach would be closed from 31 March 2021.

e) **Stilt Houses**

Pat Carney requested the date of the meeting when Councillors voted in favour of stilt houses at East Wardell and Empire Vale and the date SES objected stilt houses being built.

The Committee was advised at the meeting that a report addressing pole/stilt houses in rural areas was presented at the 24 May 2018 Ordinary meeting of Council, Item 11.1 "Dwellings in Rural Areas - Flood Mitigation Options". This report included specialist advice with attachments from Bewsher Consulting P/L, SES and OEH. The report recommended no change to the existing policy.

Earlier the completion of milestone reporting including the "Ballina Flood Study Update" and the "Wardell and Cabbage Tree Island Floodplain Risk Management Study" resulted in an amendment (No. 5) to the Ballina Shire Combined Development Control Plan in 2008. This included some conditional exemptions to the fill requirements for development in some parts of Wardell village.

Matt Wood further advised Council resolved to receive reporting on the matter in May 2017. Council sought feedback from relevant State Government Departments. This information is published on Council's website.

Pat Carney and Matt Wood discussed the level of predicted sea level rise Council has incorporated into its flood modelling. Pat referenced predicted sea level rise information he had sourced. Matt invited submission of the information for review by Council.

f) **Ballina Shire Future Water Quantity**

Mal Johnson (BES) raised concerns about future water quantity for the Ballina Shire due to irrigation and pumping from Marom Creek and also extracting from aquifers.

Staff Comment

Council extracts water from Marom Creek at the Marom Creek Weir, in accordance with the conditions of a Water Access Licence, which is issued by WaterNSW. Council also retains water access licences to access groundwater, although these allocations are not regularly used under normal operating conditions. Groundwater is identified as a drought response supply in Rous County Council's Regional Drought Management Plan.

Water extraction matters relating to private landholders are the responsibility of the State Government's Natural Resource Access Regulator (NRAR). Concerns about extraction should be referred directly to NRAR.

The information contained in the agenda was noted.

Matt Wood and Ben Smith added the importance of NRAR being the first point of contact.

g) **Healthy Waterways Project/Tuckean Swamp**

Mal Johnson (BES) requested a progress report on the Tuckean Swamp Project.

With respect to the Tuckean Swamp area a steering committee has been working on the examination of options to achieve water quality improvements. The consideration of the Tuckean Swamp area involves multiple stakeholders including Rous County Council, Lismore City Council, Ballina Shire Council, OzFish and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (noting much of the area is part of the NPWS estate). Ballina Shire Council is not the lead agency in relation to this project.

More broadly, Council is currently engaged in a number of projects focussed on the health of the waterways in Ballina Shire (part of Council's healthy waterways program). These include projects at Shaws Bay (improvements works), Lake Ainsworth (foreshore restoration), Keith Hall (floodplain drainage investigations) and Emigrant Creek (revegetation works). Council is also proceeding with the preparation of a hydrological assessment for North Creek to inform management actions.

Progress in relation to key healthy waterways programs is reported to Council on a quarterly basis through Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan reporting.

The information contained in the agenda was noted.

7. Business without Notice

a) Pearces Creek Road Crossing Safety

Mary Birch raised concerns about safety issues of crossing the road on Pearces Creek Road for the residents of the SDA village and safety of youth/children travelling to the Wollongbar Sports Field (traffic speed control).

Post Meeting Update

This matter was recently referred to staff by Cr Johnson.

Council's Traffic Engineer has reviewed the site and consulted with RMS.

Achieving compliance with the 60 kmph zone in a predominately rural area is difficult.

The crossing point for the path has good sight distance from both directions and has the appropriate warning signs. The road is too narrow for a pedestrian refuge, and the site would not meet the warrant criteria for a marked crossing.

Options to address the issue include upgrading the size of the advance warning signs and/or providing a section of BB centre line marking through the crossing (BB is the double line). Works in line with these options under consideration.

b) Roadworks – Tamarind Drive /Tintenbar Road Roadworks

Mary Birch requested information regarding the road works for the safety upgrade of the corner of Tamarind Drive and Tintenbar Road.

Post Meeting Update

Council's web page <https://ballina.nsw.gov.au/tamarind-drive-and-tintenbar-road-intersection-upgrade> contains project information, including an aerial drawing which is provided below:



c) **Wollongbar Hall**

Mary Birch commended Council for painting Wollongbar Hall.

Action: Referred to Community Facilities

d) **Vandalism**

Mary Birch noted vandalism in the Wollongbar area as a matter of concern.

e) **Ants – Wollongbar Playing Fields**

Russell Priddle outlined concerns about ants on playing fields on the Plateau.

Matt Wood advised Council is aware of the issue and is currently balancing chemical use with the impact of the ants on the playing fields.

f) **Wardell Hall and Wardell Tennis Court**

Pat Carney commended Council for works undertaken at Wardell Hall and Wardell Tennis Courts.

Action: Referred to Open Spaces

g) **Elizabeth Ann Brown Park**

Jane Gardiner enquired what works are currently being undertaken at Elizabeth Ann Brown Park.

Matt Wood advised the RSL received a grant to install a new memorial and garden beds are being rearranged as part of this work.

h) **Gallery Exhibition**

The Mayor advised there is an upcoming gallery exhibition with the theme being the river.

8. Update on COVID-19

Matt Wood advised Council is more open for business but is still operating under some restrictions and in modified ways e.g. zoom meetings.

9. Council Documents on Exhibition

The list of Council documents recently exhibited for public comment was noted.

Matt Wood further advised the Plan of Management for Community Land is also on Exhibition and closing 7 April 2021.

10. Next Meeting - Thursday 13 May 2021 at 5.00 pm

11. Meeting Closure - The meeting closed at 5.46 pm