

20. BURWOOD/PEGASUS COMMUNITY CENTRE ACTIVITIES PROJECT - PROGRESS REPORT

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The purpose of this report is to give feedback on the Burwood/Pegasus Community Centre Activities Project, detailing achievements to date and future plans.

CONTEXT

This project was initiated in 2000 by the then Board with the following aims:

- To increase the utilisation of community centres in the Burwood/Pegasus area, in particular the Wainoni/Aranui Family Centre, Aranui Community Centre, the Ascot Community Centre and the Parklands Community Centre.
- To ensure residents of Burwood/Pegasus are aware of and have access to recreational, sport, arts, and cultural programmes offered by community centres in their area.
- To co-ordinate the provision of programmes offered by community centre, to avoid duplication and to best utilise Community Board, Council and community resources.

The Community Board was concerned about the under-utilisation of community centres in its area, particularly given the large investment by the Council in these centres, and also wished to increase community participation in recreation activities. It made a three year funding commitment of \$30,000 per annum to this project (2000/01; 2001/02 and 2002/03 financial years) towards the employment of an Activities Co-ordinator to act as a catalyst to “make things happen” at these community centres. The Board recognised that voluntary management committees often lacked the programming and marketing expertise to establish new activities at their centres and could benefit from working with a trained Activities Co-ordinator.

Prior to the appointment of an Activities Co-ordinator to undertake this project, the Pegasus Recreation Adviser carried out research on the above community centres to determine current levels of use and gaps in recreation provision and to identify programmes occurring in the immediate area. From this research recommendations were made on types of programmes to implement and future direction for these centres.

Commencement of the project was delayed by the unavailability of office space at the Shirley Service Centre, which meant that the two part-time (10-15 hours per week) Activities Co-ordinators who had been appointed found other employment before starting in the positions.

Ken Howat, Pegasus Community Recreation Adviser (a 20 hour per week position) was then appointed as Activities Co-ordinator in April 2001 for a further 20 hours per week. His role is to work as a catalyst to initiate new programmes and to work alongside centre management committees to promote existing programmes and attract more users to these community centres.

Ascot Community Centre and the Wainoni/Aranui Family Centre were identified as the most in need of support and have therefore been the main focus of this project to date.

ASCOT COMMUNITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Establishment Phase

The first task was to establish a relationship with the centre management committee to look at ways to promote and market the centre and to identify potential programmes. Existing users were then contacted to discuss ways to increase participation in their programmes.

An ongoing process of community consultation was instigated to determine what new activities the local community would like to see established. This involved the Activities Co-ordinator attending the regular Burwood/Pegasus Community Networking Forum meetings, inviting people to make suggestions and maintaining regular contact with local service clubs and community groups.

Of the four community centres in this project, Ascot Community Centre was the most under utilised, with only three regular weekly user groups, two of which, the Parklands Playcentre and the seniors table tennis, were there temporarily while the Parklands Community Centre was under renovation. The table tennis group has since decided to remain at Ascot Community Centre. The other regular user is the Handiscope group which is a recreational club for older adults with disabilities.

New Programmes Established

Leisure Unit research clearly identifies older adults as a rapidly growing segment of our population, with the Canterbury region having the second largest population aged 65 and over of any region in the country. This is also evident in the increasing demand citywide for recreation programmes for older adults, for example walking groups, social clubs and gentle exercise programmes. Research also suggests that older people who are actively involved in recreation, fitness, arts and the community enjoy enhanced social well being, reduced loneliness and greater independence than inactive older people.

With this in mind work began to develop the Ascot Community Centre as a centre for older adults, while still being available for general community and casual use. Ascot Community Centre, being fully accessible with ramps, disabled toilets and close parking, was considered ideal for these purposes.

1. Table Tennis

The table tennis group had been struggling for some time to find members, with only two or three regular players. They were also having difficulty with the tables, which were heavy and difficult to set up, especially for seniors. This group was supported by the Activities Co-ordinator with newspaper promotion and funding assistance via the Hillary Commission Community Sport Fund to purchase two easily manoeuvrable tables. Membership has increased to 12 regular players with interest shown in establishing a second weekly session.

2. Sit and Be Fit - Chair Based Exercise Programme

Term 4 saw the start of two new programmes specifically for older adults - chair exercise and a leisure club. Both programmes have been very well supported, with an average attendance over the term of 15 and 13 respectively. Both programmes were run as a pilot to determine demand, which has been clearly demonstrated and both will continue in the new year. The chair exercise programme is now self sufficient with the revenue generated covering expenses.

3. Ascot Leisure Club

The Ascot Leisure Club is following the successful formula of other leisure clubs provided by the Recreation and Arts Team around the City and involves a variety of social and recreational activities. The Leisure Club meets the needs of older adults aged 75 plus, who may be socially isolated or experiencing difficulties in becoming involved in their local community. Activities are low cost and transport is available for those who have a genuine need.

The Next Step - 2002/03

To increase participation in these programmes a low cost promotional strategy will be implemented utilising community newspapers, older adults publications, interest groups and residents' associations' newsletters. This will raise the profile of the Ascot Community Centre as a centre for older adults and attract more users. From the core group of current users it will be possible to explore other potential programmes. Already a number of suggestions have been made regarding the establishment of new programmes, for example scrabble club, walking group and yoga.

The Leisure Unit's Active Christchurch Co-ordinator is currently working on implementing citywide tai chi programmes targeting older adults. This will be a modified form of tai chi with a focus on improving balance and co-ordination and ultimately reducing the incidence of falls and associated health problems. These programmes will be based in community centres around Christchurch with one planned for the Ascot Community Centre beginning in term one 2002. Already there is strong interest in this programme from current Ascot users.

Summary

With the Handiscope club, the establishment of the Leisure Club and the Sit and Be Fit exercise class plus the increased participation in the seniors' table tennis, Ascot now has four established groups catering for older adults. The average combined attendance figures for these programmes per week is 46, as compared with ten prior to the start of the project.

Ascot has the capacity and potential to offer more programmes for this target group and indeed for the general community. As the needs of the local community are identified every effort will be made to accommodate these within the resources available. Where appropriate and where possible all new programmes will work towards community ownership and self-sufficiency. This will enable long-term sustainability with minimal cost to the Council in terms of dollars and people resources.

WAINONI/ARANUI FAMILY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Establishment Phase

The Aranui and Wainoni communities demonstrate a range of needs very different from other communities in the Burwood/Pegasus Wards, particularly around the Hampshire Street area. Key issues are high unemployment, low income, a high percentage of Maori and Pacific Islanders and the high number of community groups that appear to be operating in isolation, offering a range of community services, educational programmes and recreation activities. One of the challenges in establishing new programmes in Aranui is to avoid duplication by co-ordinating and promoting existing programmes offered by these groups.

In order to work effectively in this community it is essential to develop positive relationships with local residents and the many community groups working in the area. Aranui has been the subject of extensive ongoing research by the City Council, Housing New Zealand and other government agencies, all of which has clearly identified unmet recreation needs for this community, particularly for young people.

A community consultation process was already in place through the Aranui Community Renewal prior to the Activities Co-ordinator commencing work on this project. Through this process the decision was made to hold the Aranui Youth Forum, which highlighted and reinforced the need for programmes targeting children and young people.

New Programmes Established

With the recreation needs for young people in this area clearly identified, work began on establishing programmes to meet the recommendations from the research, within the scope of the Activities Co-ordinator position and resources available. All programmes to date have been the result of supporting local community groups to set up and manage the programmes independently, with seeding funding provided for programmes to cover set up costs.

1. Hip Hop Dance Group

This programme began in September after an approach by a local youth agency seeking funding assistance. Initially one programme was set up targeting children up to 13 years of age. However, demand was such that a second programme was established for young people aged 13 years and over. The junior programme is held in the Family Centre and the seniors use the performing arts facility at Aranui High School. This programme has proved to be very popular, with up to 30 children and youth attending each session. Seeding funding for this was provided through the Activities Co-ordinator's budget and the Community Response Assistance Fund. Discussions are underway to determine how this programme will continue for 2002.

2. Junior Touch Rugby

There have been numerous requests for activities to take place on Wainoni Park. One local group, Canterbury Maori Touch, took the initiative and set up a junior touch module at Wainoni Park on Friday afternoons. With funding assistance via the Hillary Commission Community Sport Fund and the Activities Co-ordinator's budget, they were able to purchase equipment and meet the costs of promotional material needed for this programme. The programme ran from October to mid December 2001. Again discussions are underway to determine how this programme will continue for the remainder of the touch season.

3. "A-Town" Drop In Programme

The most recurring demand for programmes in this area has been for a youth drop in centre. However, the reality of this community is that any drop in programme will attract children of all ages. Teenagers are often in charge of younger siblings and consequently any drop in programme must acknowledge this and be able to accommodate an age range from 4-18 years. There are a significant number of young people in Aranui who are in this situation and for whom the traditional holiday programmes are not appropriate.

A-Town drop in programme recognised this and offered an alternative. The programme was based in the Te Kupenga building adjacent to the Family Centre that was empty over January 2002. This provided an ideal opportunity to run a pilot programme during the holiday period. Two local community workers were employed as supervisors and a local community organisation took on the administrative responsibility and provided supervision for staff and volunteers. The programme is currently being reviewed before an informed decision can be made on how to proceed with this programme.

4 Holiday Programmes

Agape Street Ministries was funded to run two holiday programmes for children aged 5-12 years over the summer 2001/02, based at Wainoni Primary School. One was held before Christmas and the other in the last week of the holidays.

The Next Step - 2002/03

While undertaking this project the Activities Co-ordinator has uncovered some real and perceived barriers to utilisation of the Wainoni/Aranui Family Centre. These issues need to be explored in more detail.

The focus to date for this community centre and surrounding area has been on children and youth. It will be necessary to cast the net wider and consider activities for other sections of this community. Linking in with the Community Consultation Co-ordinator will be one way of identifying the types or programmes wanted.

Another big issue here is to develop an effective way to promote existing programmes. At present there are numerous programmes occurring in isolation that would benefit from a co-ordinated promotional strategy.

Summary of Youth Programmes

The above youth programmes have met some of the immediate recreation needs of this community, as identified through the Aranui Youth Forum, Housing New Zealand research and the Parks and Waterways Unit Wainoni Park community consultation, with approximately 400 attendances in these programmes. There are still a significant number of recommendations that are yet to be considered and actioned.

BUDGET FOR THE ACTIVITIES PROJECT

This project has been funded by a Board Project Funding allocation of \$30,000 per annum for a three year period (2000/01; 2001/02; 2002/03 financial years). However, it should be noted that for the 2000/2001 financial year only \$17,500 was made available by the Community Advocate because of the late start of this project. This funding was expended on three months' salary for the Activities Co-ordinator, a contribution towards administrative costs associated with establishing the position (initially at Ascot Community Centre), research and programme establishment costs. The funding for 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 will be utilised to continue the employment of a co-ordinator for 20 hours per week, plus a contribution towards administrative expenses and a small project budget to be used for establishing and promoting programmes. In addition the Leisure Unit has provided \$4,000 per annum from its operational budget towards this project.

FOCUS OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE ACTIVITIES PROJECT: JANUARY 2002 TO JUNE 2003

As programmes become established at Ascot Community Centre and the Wainoni/Aranui Family Centre, attention will be given to developing activities and profile at the Aranui Community Centre, the South Brighton Community Centre and the new Parklands Community Centre and to ensuring that Burwood/Pegasus residents are aware of these opportunities through a programme of increased marketing and promotion.

As programmes are established by the Activities Co-ordinator they are being designed to cover their costs and to be run by the local community centre management committee and/or participants, with oversight from the Community Recreation Advisers.

Once community centres in the Burwood/Pegasus area are "humming" and closer to capacity, it will become the role of the Community Recreation Advisers to maintain this activity and continue to work with community centre management committees to promote their activities and keep up with trends. It is therefore not envisaged that this project would require funding beyond the Board's present commitment of 2002/03.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the information be received.
 2. That the Board allocate \$30,000 of its 2002/03 Project funding to the Community Centre Activities Co-ordinator project.

- Chairperson's Recommendations:**
1. That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.
 2. That the Burwood/Pegasus Activities Co-ordinator be commended for the progress and initiatives to date.
 3. That a meeting with the Wainoni/Aranui Family Centre Management Committee be held to discuss usage and management of the Centre and that the Board be represented by Andy Lea, Chrissie Williams and Don Rowlands.