

## **19. UPPER RICCARTON TENNIS CLUB PROPOSED EXTENSION UPDATE**

The Board was in receipt of a report regarding the proposed extension of the Upper Riccarton Tennis Club. The report also includes a recommendation to approve an allocation of the Board's Projects Funds to enable the relocation of the Riccarton Domain Winter Bowling Club which has come about as a result of consultation and discussions on the future development of the Domain.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Parks and Waterways Unit circulated a questionnaire to local residents on the future development of Upper Riccarton Domain in August last year following an application by the Riccarton Domain Tennis Club to extend their existing leased area to construct two additional courts, with one being a public court to be funded by Council.

The consultation drew a very big response from local residents including a resident initiated public meeting at Villa Maria College to discuss concerns some residents had with the proposal.

Around that time representatives from Villa Maria Board of Trustees had also approached the Council regarding potential partnerships that could lead to facilities on their site being made available for wider community use including a proposal for community sports courts on their site.

The Board agreed through its Environment Committee, to invite representatives from Villa Maria College to outline their future development proposals which subsequently took place, prior to a meeting with other sports code groups who utilise Upper Riccarton Domain.

### **MEETING WITH SPORTS CLUBS**

The Parks and Waterways Unit invited all sports clubs based on the park to a meeting which was held on Wednesday 24 October 2001 and facilitated by the Community Advocate.

The Tennis Club representatives outlined the club's proposal and stated that some changes to the current sports field layout would be required to accommodate their proposal. Whilst no guarantee was given by any of the parties present there was a general willingness on the part of all clubs present to hold further discussions regarding potential changes to field layout in order to achieve the Tennis Club's proposal.

Towards the end of that meeting representatives of the Winter Bowling Club indicated that they were currently considering their future options and that they may be prepared to relocate from their current site. Potentially this offers some excellent outcomes for both the park and the community as a whole and the Council took up the club's offer to hold further discussions on the matter.

### **RICCARTON DOMAIN WINTER BOWLING CLUB**

The Parks and Waterways Advocate and the Sports Development Team Leader met with representatives of the Riccarton Domain Winter Bowling Club and the Riccarton Racecourse Bowling Club on 8 November 2001. The Riccarton Domain Winter Bowling Club outlined the issues they were facing in terms of an aging facility and playing surface and that there was a strong demand for a good quality all weather playing surface in the north west area.

The two clubs had already been involved in discussions about potential amalgamation and already have some members that belong to both clubs. At present both clubs operate seasonally with Riccarton Racecourse active over the summer and the Winter Bowling Club operating during the winter.

The amalgamation of both clubs makes a lot of sense and would be a far more cost effective use of the combined resources of both clubs. Both clubs would benefit financially from an amalgamation in the long term. The all weather surface necessary for winter play would also be usable during the summer providing much needed additional capacity for the summer members.

Both bowling clubs indicated a willingness to pursue the possible relocation of bowls off the Domain however they advised that there were funding issues that would need to be addressed in order to achieve the desired outcome and that they would be looking to the Council for some assistance in that area.

The meeting concluded with staff requesting the clubs to hold further discussions with their respective members with the intention of bringing back a formal proposal to the Council along with estimated costs and timeframes.

## **BOWLING CLUBS' JOINT PROPOSAL**

The Riccarton Racecourse Bowling Club and the Riccarton Domain Winter Bowling Club presented a joint proposal to a meeting held at the Sockburn Service Centre on 13 December 2001. The meeting was attended by the Sockburn Community Advocate and Committee Secretary, Chairman of the Riccarton/Wigram Environment Committee, Parks and Waterways Advocate and the Leisure Unit's Sport Development Team Leader.

The two clubs have reached an agreement which provides for both clubs to be based on the current site of the Riccarton Racecourse Bowling Club.

The Riccarton Racecourse Bowling Club operates on a leased site on the Riccarton Race Course and will require an extension to its existing leased area to undertake the development. Riccarton Racecourse Management informally have given the club an encouraging and favourable response to their proposal. However the club has held off formally approaching Management until the Council's response is known following the outcome of this report.

The clubs are seeking financial assistance to construct an all weather playing surface at the Riccarton Racecourse Bowling Club which will allow the Riccarton Domain Winter Bowling Club to surrender its existing lease on Upper Riccarton Domain allowing the area to be re-integrated back into the park as freely available public open space.

All parties present at the meeting acknowledged the merits of the proposal and the potential for significant benefits to the wider community not only in terms of the park but also increased recreational opportunities for local residents and particularly some of the senior members in our community. The meeting concluded with staff undertaking to go back to their respective Units with the intention of securing funding to allow the proposal to go ahead.

While both clubs have indicated a willingness to work with the Council to achieve what will ultimately be a very good community outcome they have also stressed that they have had to put other programmed developments on hold and they are only interested if it is not a long drawn out process.

### **ESTIMATED PROJECT COST**

The proposal showed an all up total cost of \$170,000 to establish an all weather playing surface at the Riccarton Racecourse Bowling Club. This does not include removing buildings or any re-instatement of the Winter Bowling Club site on Upper Riccarton Domain. However there is provision within the Parks and Waterways Maintenance Budget to undertake this work although that would not include any future development of the site.

The Parks and Waterways Unit proposes the following sources of funds to achieve the Council's commitment to the project.

Riccarton/Wigram Community Board Environment Committee Project Funds 2001/2002 (currently \$35,000 available)	\$20,000
Riccarton/Wigram Community Board Project Funds 2002/2003	\$20,000
Parks and Waterways Unit Budget Programme 2002/2003	<u>\$65,000</u>
Total	<u>\$105,000</u>

Obviously the Council's commitment will be subject to the Club coming up with its share of the project and the Winter Bowling Club surrendering its current lease following confirmation from all parties that they are able to proceed with the project.

Any funding committed by the Council will be held and retained by the Council until the clubs have raised their financial contribution, tendered the project and confirmed they are in a position to undertake the development including the completion of any necessary legal measures, lease extensions, etc to protect the interests of all parties.

## CONCLUSION

The Parks and Waterways Unit is enthusiastic about the current proposal as it holds the key to resolving a very difficult issue which has divided the local community. The relocation of the Winter Bowling Club provides significant benefits for the wider community and extends beyond simply those issues associated with the future use and development of Upper Riccarton Domain.

Staff and elected members are well aware of the issues associated with this site and the fact that the Domain has very poor road frontage and visibility from Yaldhurst Road due to the location and presence of various sports clubs.

Effectively there was little chance of addressing those issues without the co-operation of the club as the site tenure of all clubs is protected through their lease agreements. Opportunities such as this are very rare and there are far too many beneficial outcomes to simply walk away from this proposal.

To some degree this proposal has overtaken the Tennis Club's application. However decisions need to be taken on this proposal prior to finalising a position on the Tennis Club's application as it has a significant influence on the future development options and opportunities for the Domain.

It is important to note that while the Tennis Club application and the Bowling Club proposal are linked to a certain degree, the Bowling Club proposal provides a significant number of benefits to the park and wider community and stands on its own merit. The Parks and Waterways Unit would still be actively pursuing the Bowling Club proposal even in the absence of any application from the Tennis Club.

The Board **resolved** to strongly support the relocation of the Riccarton Domain Winter Bowling Club and seek speaking rights at the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee meeting to support the funding application for this proposal.

The Board has allocated \$20,000 from its 2001/02 Environment Committee Project Funds and a further \$20,000 will be considered by the Board's Finance and Policy Committee when it meets to allocate its 2002/03 Project Funds.

The relocation of the Riccarton Domain Winter Bowling Club will be subject to conditions proposed by the Parks and Waterways Unit.