

15. BURWOOD/PEGASUS ACTIVITIES PROJECT: KEY FOCUSES 2002/03

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The purpose of this report is to present to the Board the proposed focuses/directions of the Burwood/Pegasus Activities Project for its final year of operation.

INTRODUCTION

The Activities Co-ordinator's position has been in place for 12 months, with the main focus being on the Wainoni/Aranui Family Centre and the Ascot Community Centre. A number of well supported and successful programmes have been established in these centres.

With staff changes it is now an appropriate time to re-visit the direction of this project and to consider the allocation of staff resources to the community centres in the Burwood/Pegasus area during 2002/03 (the final year of this project).

BACKGROUND

This project was initiated in 2000 by the Community 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 centres, 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.

Commencement of the project was delayed by the unavailability of office space at the Shirley Service Centre and the resignations of the original appointees.

Ken Howat, Pegasus Community Recreation Advisor (a 20 hour per week position), was appointed as Activities Co-ordinator in April 2001 for a further 20 hours per week to achieve the above aims of this project. With Ken's appointment to a permanent position within the Leisure Unit there is a need to fill this vacancy.

The 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.

BURWOOD/PEGASUS COMMUNITY CENTRES

(a) Ascot Community Centre

Christchurch City Council Leisure 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 city-wide 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 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, good heating and close parking, was considered ideal for these purposes.

Programmes

Ascot now has three weekly programmes targeting older adults: Handiscope, Leisure Club and the Sit 'n Be Fit exercise group. The seniors table tennis has recently returned to the Parklands Community Centre after completion of the renovations. Plans are underway to establish a Tai Chi programme at Ascot.

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.

Focus for 2002/03

To increase participation in these programmes a promotional strategy will be implemented utilising community newspapers, older adults publications, interest groups and residents associations' newsletters. This will raise the profile of 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.

As new programmes become established and work toward self sufficiency, the Activities Co-ordinator can withdraw, leaving the Community Recreation Advisor to provide whatever ongoing support/assistance that may be required.

(b) Wainoni/Aranui Family Centre

The Aranui community demonstrates a range of needs very different from other communities in the Burwood/Pegasus Wards, particularly around the Hampshire Street area. Key issues in this community are high unemployment, low income, and a high percentage of Maori and Pacific Island residents.

This community has been the subject of numerous research studies and is currently the focus of a Community Renewal.

The Activities Project can contribute much value to this community, adding to people's personal development and well-being, and community cohesion.

All programmes to date have been working towards meeting the recommendations from existing research and have come about as a result of supporting local community groups to set up and manage the programmes independently.

Programmes to date include Hip Hop Dance workshops, Junior Touch Rugby and the "A Town" Drop In holiday programme, which ran in January. This programme has since been operating on Friday nights from the Family Centre.

Programmes run in the April school holidays included a Hip Hop workshop, percussion workshop and a rugby league coaching programme run by the Eastern Suburbs Rugby League Club. The very successful "A Town" holiday programme which piloted in January did not run in April due to insufficient volunteer staff numbers. A volunteer training programme was set up to recruit and train local residents as volunteers but was not successful in recruiting numbers. The Pegasus Recreation Advisor is currently having discussions with local groups on how best to set up and manage youth programmes and will be assisted in this process by the soon to be appointed Activities Co-ordinator. Funding has been allocated for youth programmes during term holidays for the next financial year.

Focus for 2002/03

The focus to date for this community centre and surrounding area has been on children and youth. The following issues will need to be considered for future activities:

- Identifying the recreation needs of other age groups.
- Co-ordination and promotion of existing recreation activities.
- Establishing a volunteer pool to ensure on going sustainability of programmes, particularly for children and youth.
- Working alongside the Family Centre Management Committee to look at ways of increasing usage.
- Upskilling community groups to enable them to successfully run programmes.

(c) Aranui Community Hall

The Aranui Community Hall has received minimal attention to date from the Activities position due to the demands of Ascot and the Family Centre. This facility enjoys relatively high levels of usage. However, there are opportunities to establish new programmes and of course to boost attendance numbers for existing programmes.

Focus for 2002/03

- Regular promotion of existing activities.
- Developing a relationship with Cowles Stadium to encourage satellite programmes delivered by Cowles staff at this facility.
- Identifying local recreation needs through survey, informal feedback, etc.
- Supporting existing groups to retain members.

The issues and focuses discussed in sections (b) and (c) above clearly demonstrate the need for the Activities Co-ordinator to focus the majority of his/her attention on the Aranui community, working alongside the Aranui Renewal Project and community agencies.

(d) Parklands Community Centre

The Parklands Community Centre is back at full occupancy since the completion of the renovations and does not require additional input over and above the support given by the Burwood Community Recreation Adviser. A community consultation process is currently happening in Parklands seeking feedback on the youth facility and recreation issues first identified in the Burwood/Pegasus Youth Recreation Needs Study. This process is being managed by the Community Recreation Adviser and the Community Development Adviser and will not generate additional work for the Activities project. Therefore hours should not be allocated from the project to this facility.

(e) South New Brighton Community Centre

This facility is currently managed by the South New Brighton Primary School, which is the main user and has first call on the facility between the hours of 9.00 am - 3.00 pm. There is also an after school programme operating each week day. The Activities Co-ordinator may be able to offer some assistance to the school with developing and promoting evening activities at the centre and this could be investigated over 2002/03 .

Focus for 2002/03

Offer assistance to the South New Brighton Primary School to develop and promote evening activities.

(f) North New Brighton War Memorial Hall

This facility is to be renovated over the next two years. Provided the renovations happen within the time frame of the Activities project and dependent upon final operating decisions, the Activities Co-ordinator could offer programming and promotional assistance.

Focus for 2002/03

Activities Co-ordinator to offer programming/promotional assistance if the centre is operational within the 2002/03 financial year.

CONCLUSION

This project is contributing much benefit to the residents of the Burwood/Pegasus area, creating opportunities for people to socialise, enjoy leisure activities and feel good about the community in which they live. The project is also enlivening under-utilised community centres and bringing them back into focus as places where people can gather and meet each other.

As discussed above the recommended key focus of this project for its final year of operation is the Aranui/Wainoni community, with some time also allocated to continuing the development of Ascot Community Centre as a "community hub", particularly for older residents, and to offering assistance if required to the South New Brighton Community Centre and the North New Brighton War Memorial Hall.

Recommendation: That the Community Board approve the above key focuses/directions for the Burwood/Pegasus Activities Project for the 2002/03 financial year.

Chairperson's Recommendation: That the abovementioned recommendation be adopted.