

7. RICHMOND NEIGHBOURHOOD COTTAGE

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the outcome of discussions with the Richmond Neighbourhood Cottage Management Committee, members of which also act as the area's acknowledged residents association, relating to the issues and requirements of managing the Richmond Cottage.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The report provides a follow up as a result of the committee's deputation, Chairman Graeme Reddell to the Community Board on 26 January 2005.

The situation commenced as a result of the effect of the Council's annual community facilities report, current health and safety processes, maintenance issues and impending management responsibilities relating to the assignment of facility supervision to individual hirers/user groups. The committee was concerned that it did not have the capability to respond to those needs as well as carry out its role as an acknowledged resident's committee.

It was agreed that advisory staff would attend a forthcoming Richmond Cottage and Residents Committee meeting. A resolution process was established where discussion would take place to determine the Association's desire to continue with the Cottage's management and its associated responsibilities. This also involved how Council staff would assist the committee to comply with its management role and statutory requirements. Should the Committee consider that it wished only to follow the option as the adjacent community's acknowledged "residents" group, staff would provide information and assist as requested with the process that the committee would need to follow to alter its constitution and divest its management responsibilities.

A full and frank discussion took place at the committee's meeting of 15 February where the options were explored. Staff retired from the meeting after approximately 65 minutes, to leave the 7 members present to determine their decision. It was agreed that the secretary would advise the committee's decision in writing. The secretary duly advised in a letter dated 28 February 2005, that the committee wished to cease its management of Richmond Cottage and re-establish itself as a "residents" only group (letter attached).

Advisory staff support and recommend that the Committee's decision be accepted.

The Richmond Community Cottage Committee

The committee's constitution indicates that it has a dual responsibility to act as the Cottage's management committee and as the Richmond community's "residents" association. The committee is recognised by the Council under the Residents Associations – Formation and Recognition Policy.

The committee has also been assigned management responsibilities for the Cottage since its inception in October 1977.

In relation to the residents issues it has been very active responding to local issues that have included for a number of years, the Justice Department's Periodic Detention Centre, as well as effectively managing the cottage.

The current committee finds itself small in number with leadership generally being provided by the Chairman and Secretary.

COMMUNITY FACILITY MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As part of the Council's annual reporting outcomes each committee is required to contribute to this process with relevant information. The information sought for the 2004 report appears to have contributed to the committee questioning its wish and ability to carry on with the management of the Cottage. As part of the current change management process a review of management and operational procedures for community facilities managed by the Community and Recreation Unit is currently underway. This involves clarifying operational processes while recognising the Council's responsibility to meet statutory requirements (these include requirements under the Health and Safety Act 1992, evacuation procedures, occupancy controls and assigning facility user responsibilities to each user/hirer). It will be necessary for management committees to accept agreed levels of responsibility probably through a formal management agreement.

OPTIONS DISCUSSED WITH THE RICHMOND COMMUNITY COTTAGE COMMITTEE

The first option discussed was to maintain the status quo of a combined Cottage and residents Committee. This was discussed and debated with the committee, and included how Council staff could be more supportive. Discussion also took place regarding the new Community and Recreation Unit structure.

The alternative was for the committee to cease its role as the assigned management committee for Richmond Cottage. Discussion took place regarding the committee's future and continuing access and use of the facility.

Should the committee wish to cease its management responsibilities the support that would be provided to amend its rules of incorporation including continuing acknowledgment as a recognised residents group was discussed. Information was provided from the companies' office to assist the committee in its decision-making.

THE RICHMOND COTTAGE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE

Shortly after the meeting date the Secretary (Margaret Cockburn) advised by phone with confirmation by letter that the committee had determined that it wished to relinquish its management responsibilities and re-establish itself as a residents committee.

Staff will assist the committee regarding the handover of the Cottage which is now to be managed by Council staff and assist with the promotion of a community meeting to re-establish a residents group.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. The major aspect of the voluntary committee's withdrawal from day to day role management responsibilities will be that it will impact on local Community Engagement Team staff. It is estimated that fielding and confirming rental inquiries, managing the booking process will slightly increase workloads by up to 4 to 6 hours per month. This is able to be accommodated by the Community Engagement Team.
4. With regard to legal issues there will be no impact on Council responsibilities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Community Board accept the request of the Richmond Neighbourhood Cottage Committee to relinquish management of the Cottage.
2. The staff of the Community and Recreation Unit assist the committee to adjust its constitution and reform as the Richmond Residents' Association.
3. The Community Board formally acknowledge the committee for the work that it has carried out in managing the Richmond Neighbourhood Cottage.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

For discussion.

BACKGROUND ON COMMUNITY FACILITY MANAGEMENT

5. The Council has currently in excess of 50 community facilities administered by Community and Recreation staff. Just under half are managed by voluntary community facilities through a range of agreements that were administered and implemented by the previous Community Relations Advocacy Teams.
6. The existing Community Facility Policy and Management Guidelines, adopted 27 March 1996, by the Council is currently being reviewed. This has partly been brought about by the current change management process and with an objective to provide a consistent citywide management overview of community facilities.
7. Many of the current voluntary management committees operate either through an assigned letter of management with no clear responsibilities or reporting processes including accountability, to where formal lease agreements are in place.

OPTIONS

8. The Richmond Neighbourhood Cottage Management Committee like many voluntary organisations experience from time to time are experiencing a shortage of capable manpower. The group also act as the local Council acknowledged residents association and see more value in retaining this mantle. Engagement Team staff will monitor and communicate with the Cottage's user groups and other community members with a view to empowering a new management committee when the most appropriate opportunity arises.

PREFERRED OPTION

9. Having discussed with the Management Committee their options, including how the Council could assist their continuance, the choice to relinquish the management responsibility was the Committee's. It was apparent that effective management of the Cottage was increasingly left to the Chairperson and the Secretary. The committee felt that by withdrawing from the Cottage's management role, they would be of more value to their community by concentrating on local issues affecting residents. The Committee also felt it was no longer able, due to its capabilities, of assisting the Council with its statutory Health and Safety monitoring and audit role requirements.

ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

The Preferred Option

10. While accepting the current Management Committees wish to relinquish the management role of Richmond Neighbourhood Cottage this in no way inhibits the ability of Engagement Team staff to re-establish a community management committee in the future.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Allows those active and interested in the affairs of the Richmond Community to continue without the additional responsibilities of managing the Cottage.	Minor impact on staff costs and commitment. Area Engagement staff already manage a number of other Council venues in the Linwood/Shirley service area.
Cultural	The change of management structure with the Cottage reverting back to Council management will not effect this outcome.	The major impact here is not so much economic but the loss of community empowerment to manage their own local community facility.
Environmental	Community & Recreation staff will maintain an effective management regime.	Forthcoming operational changes will allow immediate implementation.
Economic	Direct management may actually reduce costs over time.	N/A

Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:
 Primary alignment with community outcome: *“Our City’s infrastructure and environment are managed effectively, are responsive to changing needs and focus on long term sustainability.”*
 Also contributes to: *“Our City encourages a diversity of lifestyles, and a sense of social connection, place and identity”* and *“We recognise our bicultural heritage in our multicultural society.”*

Impact on Council’s capacity and responsibilities:
 Will involve Council in direct facility management activities including monitoring and auditing use, but also allows for the Community and existing user groups to maintain access and usage of the Cottage.

Effects on Maori:
 Local runaka are not affected by this issue.

Consistency with existing Council policies:
 Consistent with existing Council administrative actions. The existing operational policy and guidelines are currently under review to meet the recently implemented “Vision for the City”.

Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest:
 The Richmond Neighbourhood Cottage Management Committee is representative of the local neighbourhood and user groups with staff accepting that this is the current wish that prevails.

Other relevant matters:
 With likely impending changes to be bought about through the current review of the community facilities vision and strategy as well as the management and operational guidelines resource manual, Community and Recreation staff consider that it was inappropriate to foster or invite other members of the community to consider a management role associated with the Cottage at this time. It will also allow those existing Cottage management committee members to concentrate on stabilising and reforming the Richmond Residents group without the struggle or conflict with the reforming of a Cottage management committee.