



**Joint Community Liaison Group for the Martinborough and Greytown Wastewater Treatment Plants
Meeting Minutes, 9.8.22**

Opening

We recommenced the regular CLG meetings at 5.00pm on the 9th of August online, via Zoom, facilitated by Independent Chair Andrew Freeman.

Attendees present

Community (local residents, and community representatives)

Gillies Baker, Chair, Papawai Pā
Narida Hooper, Chair of the Māori Standing Committee
Mel Maynard, Chair of the Martinborough Community Board
Maahi Kaka, Papawai Marae
Ami Coughlan, Resource Officer, Wellington Fish and Game Council
Ann Rainford, Greytown Community Board Chair
Rachel Miller, Papawai Resident and original consent submitter
Jess Cooper, Hutt Valley DHB (Health New Zealand)

Wellington Water

Rory Milne: Senior Community and Engagement Advisor
Tonia Haskell: Group Manager, Network Development & Delivery
Gillian Woodward: Manager Treatment, Network Management Group
Martin Gronback: Team Leader Treatment, Network Management Group
Adam Mattsen: Programme Lead, Network Development and Delivery

Amy Smith: Senior Engineer Network Development & Delivery
Richard Taylor, Advisor, RMA and Environment
Tisa DeDera, Administrative Support

South Wairarapa District Council

Stefan Corbett, Group Manager, Partnership and Operations
Robyn Wells, Principal Advisor, Water Transition
Sheil Priest, General Manager, Communications and Engagement

Greater Wellington Regional Council

Aaron Johnston, Resource Advisor, Environmental Regulation
Ben Bond, Environmental Protection Officer

Independent Chair – Andrew Freeman

Apologies

Katie Beattie (local resident, and an original submitter on consent)
Leo Vollebregt (local resident, and an original submitter on consent)

Business from the previous meeting

N/A

New business

- General consensus between CLG members that quarterly meetings are appropriate moving forward

Additions to the agenda/follow-up actions

- Update for community on council decision-making relating to Martinborough WWTP upgrades etc. (Mel Maynard)
- Regular community updates regarding how Papawai land is/might be used in the future, relating to the WWTPs (Rachel Miller, Papawai Resident & Andrew Freeman, Independent Chair)
- Community engagement with local Papawai community around plans to irrigate to land (For the Greytown WWTP), including technical content such as soil moisture levels, proximity to habitat and dwellings (Gillies Baker, Chair, Papawai Marae)

Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned by Independent Chair Andrew Freeman at approximately 6.30pm on the 9th August
- The next CLG meeting is scheduled to take place in three months time, the exact time and location is still to be confirmed.

Introductions

Opening Karakia (Tonia Haskell)

Wellington Water's role, and governance structure (Tonia Haskell, GM, WW)

- WW has been looked after South Wairarapa's water since 2020
- WW are a wholly council-owned organisation, owned by six councils across the region including the four metropolitan cities in Wellington, Greater Wellington Regional Council and South Wairarapa District Council
- In the current model, each council owns all of their assets, and we manage them on their behalf as their 'trusted advisor'
- Governance structure – Wellington Water Board of Directors who manages how we operate as an organisation, and Wellington Water Committee – who have either a Mayor or Councillor from each of the six council owners, as well as Tangata Whenua representative (currently two, and aiming to get a third from Wairarapa).
- Run and manage assets on behalf of councils – budgets set by councils, we do what we can with these budgets. We maintain stormwater, drinking and wastewater assets – whether they be the pipes in the ground or the plants. We are also responsible for customer interactions and maintenance of the network. Our other role lead into water reforms around strategy and planning – what does the future look like for South Wairarapa and what are the other things we can do to take you into the future.

'Setting the scene' – context (Rory Milne, Senior Communications and Engagement Advisor, WW)

- CLGs are a forum for positive community engagement, as well as being a requirement of the resource consent for the wastewater treatment plants
- Running a joint CLG for the Martinborough and Greytown Wastewater Treatment Plants, focused on the operations of the plant
- Opportunity to capture feedback, either if it is through another forum, its an opportunity to have a good flow of information between everyone
- Invitees only initially, but very much encourage people to register to become CLG members
- Run on a quarterly basis initially, unless otherwise agreed by CLG members

Question:

- Gillies Baker (Papawai Marae Chair) questioned around composition of CLG for Martinborough and Greytown, why did you not include Featherston?

Response, Tonia Haskell:

- These two plants currently have a resource consent, the CLGs are one of the conditions of that consent. They enable us to connect with the community around how the treatment plants are performing and how they are impacting the community.

- Featherston is in a different situation, in that the consent has expired. We have an extension of this consent, and we are going through the resource consenting process for Featherston. During this year, now that we've had a reset with the council around what we're doing in this space, we will be engaging with the community separately around what are the things that will make up the resource consent for that plant. So it's in quite a different space, but it doesn't mean we won't engage with the community, will be engage separately just from a different angle.

CLGs – meeting purpose and expectations (Independent Chair, Andrew Freeman)

- A reminder on the way we're going to operate the CLG ,and simple ground rules to manage group to ensure meeting is satisfactory and constructive for everyone
- Reminder the about Terms of Reference
- Purpose and spirit of CLG: Engagement to enhance communication, to help clarify and where possible remove assumptions around what is and what is not happening, and to that extent, build understanding for the community. It's not necessarily a meeting group to fix everything, but it can go a long way to clarifying, removing assumptions and building understanding, and hopefully a more informed dialogue from there on.
- Ground rules: Show respect, no personal criticisms, everyone be prepared and to try to keep to time to the agenda, no interruptions of allocated speakers, if you have a question – raise a hand or ask through the Chair, there will be a Q&A session at the end, we will try to address questions, but if we can't, Rory and the team will look to liaise afterwards to give extra clarification where its asked for.
- Please ask clarifying questions first, as the original focus
- Value the strengths of diverse input
- Participation by invitation only, Rory can expand invitations list
- Recording accessible on YouTube after meeting.

RMA – key components (Amy Smith, Senior Engineer, WW)

- Standards, Policy Statements and Plans that backup the resource consents
- RMA, Central Government which set standards, Greater Wellington Regional Council set policy statements, then end up with resource consents

Wastewater 101 (Amy Smith, Senior Engineer, WW)

- Overview of Wastewater Treatment
- How treatment plants should work, so we can understand what level of treatment can be expected for the Martinborough and Greytown Wastewater Treatment Plants
- Generic treatment plant description, first we have the network (homes, industries, cafes) produce wastewater that goes into the network
- Typically we have an index screening process, where we remove all of the inorganic material
- Then we have the bulk of the treatment, which is primary, secondary treatment and sedimentation. That's where we really treat the wastewater and remove the organic wastewater contaminants
- In Greytown and Martinborough, these liquid stream processes are combined into the pond treatment
- After liquid stream treatment, you've then got disinfection, then we can discharge to water or land
- In an Oxidation Pond, we have the wastewater coming in, we've got the top aerobic treatment layer which is where algae live. They use the sunlight to produce oxygen. That oxygen is then used by the microorganisms to eat up wastewater contaminants.

- As the wastewater travels through ponds, lots of solids settle out into the bottom anaerobic sludge layer, which accumulates over time, some of this sludge gets digested
- The sludge layer accumulates over time, to the point where you have much less effective treatment layer at the top
- Works well in small communities
- UV treatment – ultra-violet light to zap pathogens
- Treated effluent from pond goes through light blubs basically, to remove pathogens
- Ultimately, at the end of a treatment plant we'll discharge to water (Stream or River in South Wairarapa)
- Discharge to water is the typical way we've always discharged treated wastewater in New Zealand
- Resource consent states the volume, quality and discharge rate into that body of water
- Quality of treated effluent is monitored, including the effects on the river through ecological sampling in the river
- As we progress through resource consent terms, we're moving away from discharge to water to discharge to land
- Discharge to land activity provides additional treatment for nutrients in the wastewater, and a cultural value
- Disposal managed by field capacity of specific site
- Quality and effects of this activity monitored through soil and groundwater monitoring
- Disposal to land is weather dependent, and seasonal too

Operational update (Martin Gronback, Team Leader, Treatment WW)

- Martinborough and Greytown Wastewater Treatment Plants more or less the same
- Oxidation Ponds, and then UV treatment, before discharge to land or river
- Daily visits to sites to check condition and operations of Oxidation Ponds
- Just minor differences between the sites
- Pond sludge level surveys recently completed using drones, to map out layer on anaerobic sludge layer – the solids on the bottom layer of the pond, provide useful data to understand liquid and sludge makeup, to inform desludging workstream
- Health and safety improvements, including safer ladders into ponds, improved lifejackets, harness points in sampling locations, purchased portable office as base for treatment plant operators
- Remarkable improvement in reliability of irrigation equipment and operation
- Management Plans – steps to ensure that the land that receives discharge in managed in a sustainable manner
- Bird control – efforts to encourage birds to move away from site
- Flow control – multiple manual isolation valves installed at both sites, ability to isolate individual ponds, automated valve installed at Martinborough and replaced float valve.
- No inlet screens at either site, which removes inorganics and solids in incoming effluent as it comes into plant, which means that anything that goes down the toilet (sanitary products, wet wipes etc.) ends up in the ponds, we can only remove a fraction of this via outlet screens.
- Volume of ponds taken up by anaerobic/sludge layer, reduces resilience of ponds
- Dry and hot weather, evaporation effects reduces aerobic/liquid layer on top of ponds
- Market days, festivals etc. result in 'shock load' to treatment plants. Plants prefer to steady feed of nutrients
- Increased maintenance due to wet wipes, cause blockages, attracts further solids in ponds
- Contribute to higher risk of undesired conditions including odour issues
- UV treatment effectiveness dictated by effectiveness of ponds, greater amount of solids; higher clarity of water results in more effective UV treatment
- Ongoing COVID-related and global supply challenges

- Reliance on power supply
- Low river levels restrict or prohibit discharge entirely, leaving land discharge – in such cases fully reliant on operation of irrigators
- Conflicting land use

Questions:

- MCB Mel Maynard: Question regarding the effectiveness of inlet screens – would they prevent issues with sludge, and wet wipes at the treatment plants?

Martin Gronback's response: Inlet screens will capture inorganics (things that will never breakdown and have no use in ponds). Without inlet screens, part of the ponds will be filled with inorganics that could otherwise be taken up by the liquid or sludge layer. You'll always have a sludge layer, as that is what the wastewater solids breakdown to.

- Independent Chair Andrew Freeman: In reference to high profile campaigns in Auckland, a question around how the CLG can be used to help promote the messages regarding the negative impacts of wet wipes on the network and the degree of community understanding regarding the issue

Martin's response: The impact of wet wipes on the wastewater in general is horrendous and far reaching. It's not just what we get at the plant, which is at the end of the process, but it's also throughout the network; network blockages, overflows, and impacts on pump stations. The impacts are felt through the network, treatment plant operators, and residents. Some work has been done to accurately label them, some say they can be flushed, which is not the case. Yes, they can physically go down the toilet, but they should never go near wastewater. From a community engagement perspective, repeat the message, if it's not the three P's, they shouldn't go down the toilet.

- MCB Mel Maynard: How regularly are you checking to assess that the flow controls buttons installed at the Martinborough plant - that are automated - are working properly?

Martin's response: We're on site everyday – sometimes multiple times a day – visually checking this. The automatic control is operating, doing it's thing, and we can see that remotely including the level of the pond etc. We've also got backup alarms, so we're not relying on one thing. These are downstream of the valve, so if the valve fails, notifying that the pond level is increasing. So, there's multiple layers of protection, on top of the visual checks.

Project update (Adam Mattsen, Programme Lead, WW)

- Consents inform programme of work moving forward
- Resource consents granted in 2016 for both plants
- Working towards Outcomes – 100% land treatment and additional storage – to help with storing over the winter period and irrigating over the summer period.
- We're at Stage 1B at both plants, which means we're operating some irrigation to land
- The last package of years around optimising current performance and operations, and there's still ongoing constraints we're working through
- Future irrigation areas for two sites
- Martinborough WWTP: Current ponds, area in blue: Existing irrigation area, through resource consent: larger area – Pain Farm – potentially setting up for future land irrigation
- Greytown WWTP: Existing irrigation field, work to identify piece of land suitable for future land irrigation, working with property advisory team to identify suitable area of land.

- Timelines: Three-year delivery programme – moving into LTP Year Two this year, preparing scoping to achieve long term consent goals, progressively to 100% land irrigation.

Questions:

- Independent Chair Andrew Freeman asked a question regarding where people can access information regarding future Wellington Water projects in the South Wairarapa

Adam's response: The Wellington Water website has a projects page, and we will add these projects onto there including project timelines. In this forum too, we can continue to provide the latest updates on this long-term project work.

Greater Wellington Regional Council's role in the consenting process (Aaron Johnston & Ben Bond, Environmental Protection/Regulation, GWRC)

- Aaron and Ben introduce their roles at GWRC
- GWRC mandated under The Local Government Act 2002 to promote sustainable development; social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing for the communities in the region
- Resource Management Act 1991 is the key piece of legislation, this sets out how we oversee the resource consents that we uphold, we're really looking at controlling contaminants within the environment, and that they are appropriately discharged in the right places and managing the effects of them as best as they can be.
- The two consents for Martinborough and Greytown WWTP, were each granted to SWDC via fully publicly notified consent hearings. This means that there's an application that comes in from SWDC, a processing officer looks at this application, including evidence (including independent expert insight).
- Report taken to hearing, run by an independent Chair, who weighs up evidence. Live evidence provided by experts, as well as submissions by the public and other interested parties.
- Final consent then granted with certain conditions.
- GWRC monitors compliance with consent and taking enforcement action where that's not met. Wellington Water as consent owner, and SWDC is asset owner.
- GWRC offer flow monitoring data for the Ruamahanga River and Papawai Stream by an environmental science team. Data provided to WW, who then know when they can discharge and under what conditions.
- GWRC certify management plans, once checked by experts. We also compliance assessments – quarterly and annual reports checked and ad-hoc reports (i.e., February storm).
- Enforcement action if required.

Questions:

- MCB Mel Maynard had a question regarding when resource consents were granted

Aaron Johnston (GWRC) confirmed that current 35 consents for the two plants were granted in 2016.

Council perspective (Stefan Corbett, GM, Partnerships and Operations, South Wairarapa District Council)

- Thanked Wellington Water Limited for their work
- Budgets are limited due to size
- Infrastructure is old and needs improvements.
- COVID and supply chain challenges

- Wellington Water does a great job for us, and we're grateful for the work they do
- This work includes responding to emergencies, important in protecting our health and safety
- The council is committed to making improvements where we can to the four plants we've got
- We are working within limited budgets – rate base between eight and nine thousand ratepayers producing revenue
- Have to be ruthless around what we prioritise and how we spend public money
- Focus on getting drinking plants right, and we've spent seven million dollars over the past three years to get these drinking plants working properly. We've done that, they're largely compliant
- We are working with Wellington Water on wastewater treatment plants, it's common knowledge that major investment is needed to bring these plants to a modern standard, but you are really talking about a lot of money to do that. For example, desludging a plant might cost you a million and a half; you need a work programme that manages the risk attached to these plants, and we're doing that in association with WWL, and keeping GWRC informed.
- We're trying to position ourselves to reduce risks around these plants as much as we can, and position ourselves for reform.

Independent Chair Andrew Freeman invites final questions and points of clarification.

Questions:

- Gillies Baker (Trustee, Papawai Marae) questioned around plans to irrigate to land, and any limitations on proximity to dwellings and habitation.

Amy Smith (WW) response: In the next couple of years there will be a detailed design programme of work for this stage two irrigation area, and we need to take into account proximity to people, river, soil quality, potential flooding issues – it's a complex piece of work.

- Gillies Baker asked a follow up question regarding whether there is a point that the ground becomes saturated?

Amy Smith responds: We run this site as a deficit irrigation facility, we monitor the soil moisture in the groundwater. Martin and I then decide whether or not to run the irrigator each week – depending on gliding club operations and whether the land has the ability to take on the water.

As we move into the second stage, we'll have more land to apply the wastewater to, so we'd expect to discharge less to the stream and more to land, and ultimately stage 2B is where we store it over winter in a winter storage pond.

- Gillies Baker asked to check whether the land discussed for storage in Greytown is approximately 100 hectares

Amy Smith responds: Approximately 85 hectares for the second area, although questioned the amount of useable land. This information is defined in the resource consent application.

Follow-up action required: Independent Chair Andrew Freeman confirmed this is complex work, and acknowledged with would be parked and followed up between WW, and the local Papawai community.

Questions:

Narida Hooper, Chair of the Māori Standing Committee, asked for clarification on the river flow monitoring work that GWRC does, confirming whether river monitoring at the Raumahanga River is the only monitoring that GWRC does?

GWRC Aaron Johnston's response: GWRC's Environmental Science team have sensors in rivers that check for rainfall, windspeed – almost every environmental condition you can think of. The way the resource consent works, we have one specific flow monitoring site located just next to the wastewater treatment plant, and that provides the best information to give to Wellington Water, who then have a live record of what the river is doing and when they can discharge to it.

Follow-up question: Narida Hooper clarified that she was more asking about the health of the river; what is in place in terms of monitoring around fish species, habitat and cultural monitoring.

GWRC Ben Bond's response: We have a team of ecologists – with limited personnel and budget – who study the ecology of the region and monitor fish species, something that Fish and Game monitor too.

Further clarification: Narida Hooper asks about what GWRC do with this data? For example, one of the marae who regularly collect kai from the stream; what do you do with your data to inform that things are changing, and there's been an event.

Ben Bond (GWRC) confirmed that broadly science teams are looking for long-term trends that informs their regional plans.

Amy Smith added: Wellington Water do water monitoring in the river as per resource consent. We monitor the upstream, downstream and effluent quality on a monthly basis; we assess the quality of the ecology in the river. This is wrapped up in the annual report data.

Ben Bond, GWRC, added: if you're asking specifically about the plants, the onus is on SWDC/WW to carry out the ecological testing on the water quality.

Narida commented: It's about the data; for us that live in South Wairarapa that swim in that river, how do know our water is ok?

Ben Bond (GWRC) responded: It's my understanding that the TA's do let people know if there's some sort of issue with the water.

Stefan Corbett, SWDC added: There's a lot of info on the GWRC website, particularly around nutrients. They look out for E. coli, and anything nasty that might make people sick. This info is available by river on the website, Ruamahanga River in particular has plenty of information on it.

Follow-up action required: Stefan suggested that he could provide Narida with links to further information provided by GWRC.

Narida responded: That's ok, I'm more talking about the cultural monitoring.

Independent Chair Andrew Freeman confirmed his understanding of Narida's information needs.

Question: Rachel Miller, Resident in Papawai: Why don't we have inlet screens, they sound important? Is that a financial issue, just not enough money?

Amy Smith responded: We'd love to do everything we could to fix treatment plants. There is competing demand for a lot of money to be spent and inlet screens are on the inlet development programme for the sites.

Rachel Miller added: When are you going to start talking to the community about the details of how the Papawai land is going to be used?

Adam Mattsen's response: There is a big piece of work around where the future irrigation sites might be in Greytown, it's a piece of work we'll work with the SWDC's property team on. We'll be working on this alongside the council in the coming years, but we don't have a timeframe at this stage.

Follow-up question: Rachel Miller's husband Matt: We'd like to see some involvement about the land again moving forward, and what its impact is going to be i.e., monitoring of our well water etc.

Tonia Haskell acknowledged this point, and the requests that have been put. These things have been invaluable to us as the new tangata tiaki over this place, we have to balance how much money we can get from the council and the ratepayers, and then what we do with it, so your input is invaluable.

SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEM Independent Chair Andrew Freeman suggested this might be a possible future agenda item.

Question: MCB Mel Maynard had a question about whether any of the land for irrigation how much water it is actually holding, as many of them run through flood plains and high-water tables at Pain Farm. Has the testing actually been done that it's actually capable of doing the work that you need it to do?

Amy Smith response: As part of the resource consent application from 2014-16, experts assessed both sets of land although more detail was done on the Martinborough land. The resource consent reflects the work that was done, and we have set application rate on Martinborough, particularly on the second piece of land, which at the time this was designed on the volumes we have to dispose of, and what that piece of land can assimilate. When each second stage is developed, we'll have to do another round of soil analysis and specific design for those sites, within the bounds of the resource consent.

Independent Chair Andrew Freeman checked for any additional points of clarification from attendees.

Independent Chair Andrew Freeman raised the regularity of meetings moving forward.

WW Senior Communications and Engagement Advisor Rory Milne commented that the general feeling having talked with his project team, was that half yearly might work best, but this would depend on level of engagement and detail that the CLG went into. At the same time, we're very much open to input and keen to find understand the preference for the majority of the CLG members.

MCB Mel Maynard added: Are you discussing the regularity as it relates to the Terms of Reference, or are we just asking at this stage? Is there capacity for more meetings, at a time when there is more things happening? As it's important to keep the engagement going, so the community knows what's happening, certainly within Martinborough.

Independent Chair Andrew Freeman asked Mel to confirm whether this would mean a preference for quarterly meetings. Mel confirmed that quarterly meetings is her preference, as a minimum.

Aaron Johnston GWRC added that the resource consent terms of reference states that quarterly meetings are required as a baseline, but there is flexibility on this provided that agreement is obtained on this between CLG members.

Independent Chair Andrew Freeman invited attendees to request any agenda items for the upcoming CLG meeting.

MCB Mel Maynard confirmed that for the Martinborough plant, when the ponds were built, they were built for a population capacity of 1500, with an absolutely stretch of 2000 people, with a 50-year life plan and this was setup in 1975. So, we're coming up to three years of this 50-year lifespan, are the upgrades to the treatment ponds – can we have a discussion of what is happening, so we're aware as a group what the council is deciding, so we know what is progressing and moving to avoid any surprises.

Stefan commented: Trying to be as helpful as possible about future investment, I'm just mindful that we don't want to get in the way of normal council process, where we would usually surface new plans like that, and where we would discuss information. On the basis that it's already been to council and decided, and as part of community engagement, perhaps that's possible, just I'm just wary of the boundaries of what this group does -the operation of existing plants and making sure everyone is happy with those – and other processes which relate to future investment decisions which would usually by run through different channels. So, if we get confused by those two things, it might dilute what this meeting is designed to achieve.

SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEM: MCB Mel Maynard clarified that all she was asking is that the CLG group are made aware of council decisions, rather than actually making these decisions.

Independent Chair Andrew Freeman inviting any further agenda items for next meeting

Closing comments: Rory Milne, Senior Communications and Engagement Advisor, WW

- Good conversations around operational aspects
- Highlighted the continued need to educate and work with the community around wastewater education, especially around the negative impacts of wet wipes
- Great opportunity to capture community feedback, and share information

Closing Karakia (Tonia Haskell)