

# DONKEY DO!

An occasional Newsletter of Highfield Donkeys Incorporated  
April 2013 Issue No 5



## Unlocking the Shed

Around 40 people came to the *shed unlocking*. After an exciting dress rehearsal the day before, the *Grand Parade* of the donkeys took place without the Grand March from *Aida* but some anticipatory *he hawing* from Teddy and an equal enthusiasm from the crowd of members and others, not to mention the odd dog walker who followed on behind. The *shed* was duly unlocked, the doors flung open and the magic ribbon cut by Jim and Karen and everybody got down to enjoying the celebration. The donkeys behaved. The practical demonstration of trimming a few hooves opened eyes and mouths. The kids (aided and abetted by various adults) set out to answer the questions presented them; everybody had a go at counting the bales in the hay shed. Everybody was a winner. And after an early quick shower, the rain stayed away.

Nobody doubted that Alison would have approved. We need to thank all those who donated or contributed in other ways or came to the event.

## Negotiations with Council

The latest meeting with Council was on 2 April. What was good was that we got to meet the Board members involved and we agreed that the next step is signing a *Memorandum of Understanding* that will confirm a structure for dealing with matters relating to the donkeys at Highfield. The intention is to seek to get the final agreed text to the Rodney Local Board in time for this to be considered and signed by the month of June—in time for the new financial year. Most of the work that is covered and which will start of with, relates to the day to day and will benefit all of us—as well as the donkeys. An ongoing concern however remains the current insistence of Council that the final agreement they are looking for will be a lease for occupancy of the Reserve, for which we have no enthusiasm based on what we see in their current stance and documentation. What is reassuring is that we will have up to 18 months to sort out the final agreement which will allow us to continue to strengthen the Society and to work through what the real options are as well as polish our arguments.

The extended time table reflects the time it takes Council to actually deal with its own issues and events, given the amount of work the Board and staff face in moving from the planning-dominated last couple of years, to the serious work that can now start to be put in place across every major area of activity—of which we are a small (if not tiny) part. An added feature will also be that the Council and Board elections in October will mean a new Board that will only take up its responsibilities in November.

## The Highfield Donkeys Committee

Peter Couling - Chairman  
Alan Norton - Secretary  
Peter Caccia - Birch- Donkey Manager  
Jenny van der Mespel                      Shona Duncan  
Allan Ford                                      Sheila Ford

## The AGM : Time to start planning for Next Year

The Society's financial year will end on 30 June 2013. We have begun planning for what happens next year with formal activity starting with the AGM in the second or third week of July (to be confirmed). There is a need to strengthen the Committee to meet a challenging second year in which we confirm and grow what we have managed already as well as maintain the ongoing negotiations with Council and work on the longer term financing of the upkeep of the donkeys. We are looking to present members to continue to support us when the time comes in 2013/14

## Highfield Donkeys Incorporated

71 Fidelis Avenue, Snells Beach, Warkworth 0920 For more information call Alan Norton or Email [alan.norton@xtra.co.nz](mailto:alan.norton@xtra.co.nz)

## Gateless bypass for those in a hurry

With the realignment of the fences and gates between the small donkey yard and the new hay shed we have opened up the old track that passes behind the main donkey shed alongside the home paddock and work area. The direct access from the main orchard track is between the main shed and the small donkey yard, just before the gate system into the home paddock..

This now allows a quick passage for those who want to get from the Orchard to the Swale track—to the cliffs and beach areas (or *vice versa*) without having to deal with the security gate system and any donkeys who may be hanging around.

Once everything is sorted out and there is some metal on the track we may put up a simple direction indicator at the yard end until we sort out better signage as well as update the route map. The route is quite clear approaching from the Swale.

## New Seat

A broken bench seat that has been rescued and restored by Peter Caccia-Birch is now currently parked near the hay shed so that future volunteers will be able to rest — it was not like this in my day!



The first donkey at Highfield — Toby 1970



What's ACC?

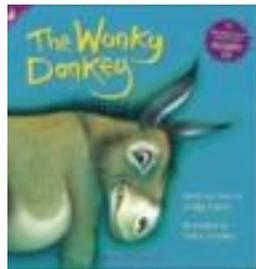
I think it is a Charity run by Auckland Council – if anyone throws themselves off the cliff, they can claim for using the helicopter to get to North Shore Hospital and time off work – if they survive!

## Conversations at Highfield

### How to find a donkey at Highfield

Available by email from Alan (alan.norton@xtra.co.nz). A few hints on where you might find the donkeys at any time (and depending on the season). There is a map of the donkey areas and some more information on the donkeys that could be useful for when you have friends or visitors who do not know Highfield and may feel lost when they arrive in the Reserve—and seemingly empty paddocks.

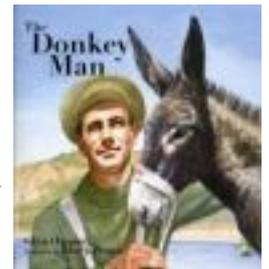
### Donkey Reading List



Prepared by Nicky Silk at Mahurangi East Library where you will find the books (and more)

Available by email from Alan (alan.norton@xtra.co.nz)

Stuff for all ages from *Wonky Donkeys to Donkeys at Gal-lipoli*.



The issue of Public Liability of the donkeys at Highfield has been raised during the discussions with Council just how it is acknowledged in the eventual agreement is not yet sorted out. Privately owned donkeys in a public reserve is not an everyday event. For us it has to start with what we can do to make sure that our own security and management of the donkeys works. And everyone can help.

- Please take care to close and latch all the gates into the paddocks and donkey work areas as you pass through.
- Generally you should leave gates between paddocks as you found them.
- The donkeys should not be outside the home yards and main donkey paddocks. They should never be in the Orchard and Garden areas unless they are with a handler.
- Whilst the Donkeys at Highfield are used to people, and always accessible and friendly they are also curious and parents and guardians should always take responsibility for their children when they approach or feed the donkeys.
- The donkeys mostly eat the grass but if you think they need a treat, apples, carrots and silver beet are fine but please, do not give them bread or cake or plastic bags. Remember also that dogs must be on a lead in the donkey areas
- If at any time you see anything that you feel is not as it should be with the donkeys or in the Reserve generally, please seek help from any of the following telephone numbers: Peter 425 6640 or Alan 425 6592 or Jenny on 425 6000
- Outside daytime/daylight hours you can also call the Auckland Council. Use the old Orewa service centre number 0800 426 5189 and stay on the line to speak to someone. If life or property is at risk—call the Emergency Services

## Highfield Donkeys Incorporated

Have you signed up yet?

Do you want to know more about it?

Would you like to be a volunteer?

Would you like to know more about other ways of being involved?

**Membership** - \$10 per household (per annum).

If you want to know more about any kind of membership either as a volunteer or an Associate or as a Champion, or about working with Highfield Donkeys Incorporated in any special way, please call the Secretary Alan Norton in the first instance, on 09 425 6592

**Donkey Care** - To find out more about working with the donkeys as a volunteer call Peter Caccia-Birch for an introduction on, 09 425 6640