

# DONKEY DO!

An occasional Newsletter of Highfield Donkeys Incorporated  
May 2013 Issue No 6



North towards Swale, Algies and cliffs area

North  
←  
Bypass  
at  
Donkey  
sheds  
→  
South



South towards orchard and Mahurangi East Road

## Negotiations with Council - recent meeting a step backward

The Council legal advisors do not accept the Society's view that the 40 years presence of the donkeys at Highfield negates the need for a formal lease as is being proposed under the current Community occupancy rules. The inference is that Rodney got it wrong and a continuation of the arrangements did not meet a strict interpretation of various sections of the Reserves Act 1977 (which has now extended to pondering just how donkeys relate to defining Highfield as a *recreational reserve*).

Our rejection of a formal lease is based on the fact that, in spite of the lack of any *formal agreement* at the transfer of the land there was a *tacit acceptance of the donkeys remaining* whilst they were healthy and managed, which has been the basis of the relationship between Alison and Rodney Council, and which has been applied since Alison's death in 2009.

All three management plans since the transfer of the land have specifically contained policies relating to the ongoing residence of the donkeys at Highfield. This has been reinforced at different times verbally and in correspondence with Alison and or the Advisory Committee. Since we first formally approached them in 2011, the Auckland Council has confirmed that it is not challenging the right of the donkeys to remain at Highfield whilst the herd is healthy and cared for and maintained. What is different is that the Society now owns and manages the present herd and with this comes the legal and financial responsibility for ensuring the future of the donkeys at Highfield. Based on what we see as examples, we do not see a lease as a sure long term solution.

Increasingly we see the matter settled by an amendment to or an update of the Management Plan (now ten years old) that would recognise the Society as being responsible for the care of the donkeys..

The MOU we had hoped would identify and settle some of the basic roles and responsibilities and provide a process and a timetable for reaching an agreement, has been shelved ( for the time being). The most likely action now is that both parties will seek the opinion of the Minister's Office on interpretation of the Act

## 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



## A bray.....from the Donkey Manager

Towards the end of the summer dry period we had to buy in extra feed for the donkeys. With 90 ml. of rain over the first week of May the grass has taken off and now only small amounts of hay are being fed to the donkeys to provide the supplement they need.. **To find out more about working with the donkeys as a volunteer call Peter Caccia-Birch on 09 425 6640**

## Highfield Donkeys Incorporated

71 Fidelis Avenue, Snells Beach, Warkworth 0920 For more information call Alan Norton or Email alan.norton@xtra.co.nz

*Whew! 'Soon be one year already!*

## Highfield Donkeys Incorporated Annual General Meeting Confirmed for Wednesday 17 July from 2.00 pm

The formal notice and agenda will be circulated in mid June. Key matters will be

- Reporting back on just how far we have come with membership, money and activities.
- Where we are at with Council and the Board
- How we see the future
- Why we need members, their ideas and their bodies
- The election of officers and the new expanded committee. (Any volunteers?)
- Any other business—tell us if you have something to bring up!

**We are looking for a speaker**



Alison  
with  
young  
donkeys  
May  
1991



If it is so relaxing coming up here, why do all the Council lawyers need heavy vehicle licences? More traffic on the road.

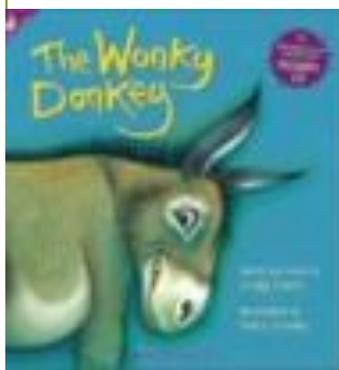
Re-creation?  
Will I get more baby donkeys to play with?

There's going to be a big debate in Parliament about donkeys in the Recreational Reserves now that we're so famous

## Conversations at Highfield

I know! It seems that everyone wants a herd of donkeys in their local park – I heard one lady tell her daughter just how refreshing it is leaving all those people behind in Remuera and coming to see us up here.

**Donkey Story Time at the Donkey Hay Shed , Highfield  
Tuesday 21 May 2013 at 10.30 am**



Nicki Silk from Mahurangi East Library will hold a *story time* session for her young readers and their caregivers. She will read some stories and rhymes about donkeys alongside the new hayshed at Highfield and then everyone will be able to get up close and meet the donkeys.

Her regulars already know about the event but if you are interested and would like to come contact Nicki at the library. The group will meet at the library first and then drive up to Highfield and will be there just after 10.30am. If it is wet the *story time* will just stay at the library however we are sure the weather will be good to us!

**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 or email alan.norton@xtra.co.nz

New memberships now will apply for 2013/2014 membership.

Watch out for the special *early bird renewal* of membership in June/July for 2013/2014 year.