

DONKEY DO!

An occasional Newsletter of Highfield Donkeys Incorporated
September 2013 Issue No 9

Secure future for Donkeys at Highfield

Some members will be aware that following our year long discussions with Council representatives, we reached what seemed an impasse in May over the sort of agreement that should be put in place, that reflected the history of how the donkeys got there and stayed.

In June both parties independently sought advice from the Department of Conservation which administers the Reserves Act 1977 under which all public land designated as one form of reserve or another is managed and which had been directly involved at the time of the gift of the Roberts land. The Society wrote to the Minister who passed our submission to the DOC office of *Statutory Land Management* in Hamilton to whom the Auckland Council had already written.



The view of the SLM Office, communicated in July and accepted by both the Council and the Society was that:

- *whilst there is no evidence of a written agreement, there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to indicate the likelihood of a verbal agreement, or at the very least an understanding on the part of the former owner, that in gifting the land for reserve purposes the donkeys would be allowed to remain on the reserve*
- *the donkeys should therefore be treated as an intrinsic feature of the reserve, and their ongoing accommodation one of the purposes of the reserve and the donkeys should be treated as having an existing right of occupation, with no statutory requirement for a grazing licence or lease*
- *the Society does not so much seek a personal benefit or right over the reserve, but rather an authority from Council to manage the donkeys; so in exercising its functions under section 40 of the Reserves Act 1977, and in giving effect to the principles set out in section 17 of the Act.*

Based on this we have now agreed with Council Parks and Reserves staff on a text of a draft *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) recognising the aims and expectations of the Auckland Council as the vested authority and the Society as the legal owners of the donkeys, which includes a schedule of agreed *Roles and Responsibilities* of the parties in the management of the donkeys at Highfield. What the MOU represents is a plain language statement of cooperation and shared responsibility and a partnership on caring for and maintaining the donkeys.

This draft will be submitted to the Rodney Local Board which now has the responsibility for management of the Reserve, following the start of the new Council/Board term for endorsement and in due course, if all agree, for signing before the end of the year (these details and timing are still being worked through).



A Meeting Point

The Hay Shed takes on greater signification every day—it is not yet the registered office of the Society but as a crossroads and a point of congregation at the centre of the donkey areas and the orchard and garden area, it is becoming a point of reference at Highfield and seems likely to continue to grow as a focus for donkey related and other activities

The Highfield Donkeys Committee

Peter Couling - Chairman
Alan Norton - Secretary
Ray Harrison - Treasurer
Peter Caccia-Birch - Donkey Manager
Lesley Cornwell - Membership

Jenny van der Mespel—Roberts Family Representative
Allan Ford—Project Manager
Sheila Ford—Facilitator
Shona Duncan—Forward programme
John Montgomerie—Forward programme

Highfield Donkeys Incorporated

71 Fidelis Avenue, Snells Beach, Warkworth 0920 For more information call Alan Norton on 4256592 or Email alan.norton@xtra.co.nz

Have you got your Donkey Bubble badge yet?



If you have already renewed your membership you should have got a badge already.

If you want more badges fill out the form or call Ray Harrison on 09 425 6101.

If you are still considering membership for the first time, you also qualify for a badge—until supplies run out. If you want to talk about membership or want an application form contact Lesley Cornwell email lesleycornwell@hotmail.com or call 09 425 4050



I always felt that there should be votes for donkeys – the four footed kind of course!

I heard someone say that donkeys will soon rule the world

Silly! It's only Highfield we are taking over

All it is - is that they have agreed that Highfield is our home and we will not have to pay rent; Unless we all decide to move into one of the new donkey rest homes in Orewa.

Conversations at Highfield



A b r a yfrom the Donkey Manager—on *Grooming!*

This is the time of the year when donkeys start to shed their hair, which is a natural process. Grooming assists the donkeys coat to remain healthy by stimulating blood flow to the surface of the skin, removing dead hair and enabling the detection of injury, parasites and skin problems. Grooming our donkeys is a soothing way of relaxing them during tie-up lessons. Anybody interested in helping with grooming, I will be at the main donkey shed at 9a.m. Saturday 21st September. If this doesn't suit please ring me at 4256640 and I can make other arrangements to suit. If you want to know about any more opportunities for excitement with donkeys, call Peter Caccia-Birch on 09 425 6640

The issue of Public Liability of the donkeys at Highfield has been raised during the discussions with Council 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

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?

2013/14 Membership

\$10 per household (per annum).

All current members/groups should have received a renewal form. If you have not had yours or you have not yet signed on for this year call Lesley Cornwell on 09 425 4050

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

Membership helps cover the cost of keeping the donkeys at Highfield