

# Donkey Serenade

Newsletter No 15

August 2015

Greetings, its that time of year again! - Highfield Donkeys Incorporated Society recently held their third Annual General Meeting at the Mahurangi East Community Centre, as you are aware, the Society exists for Community ownership and care of the donkeys at Highfield Garden Reserve - both were bequeathed to our Community by Ted and Alison Roberts (now deceased).

Chairman of the Society, Mr Peter Couling, welcomed everyone and thanked the Community for their ongoing support received on behalf of the donkeys. This includes our membership fees, donations, animal care and support for the Donkey Cards created by Allan and Sheila Ford - these are now historic items, there are only a few remaining to be sold.

In his review of the year Peter made mention of the fun Christmas Party with its old fashioned agenda, the Life Membership Certificate presented to Mr Peter Caccia-Birch in recognition of his many years of service. The MOU clarification between Auckland Council and the Society, he recognised the financial support from our Local Board, we would not be a viable group without it, and he thanked the Committee of the Society for their ongoing work.

Mr Ray Harrison our Treasurer, presented his financial report and has recommended that we continue our \$10 subscription per household again for 2015/16 financial year. (A renewal form is printed at the back of this newsletter).



## Committee Members:

Chairman: Peter Couling  
425-5766  
Secretary: Helen Whiteley  
425-55516  
Treasurer: Ray Harrison  
425-6101  
Donkey Manager:  
Peter Caccia-Birch  
425-6640  
Asst. Donkey Manager:  
John Montgomerie  
425-8808  
Roberts Family Rep:  
Jenny van der Mespel  
425-6000  
Membership Secretary:  
Lesley Cornwell  
425-4050  
Facilitator: Sheila Ford  
Projects: Alan Ford  
425-5061  
Newsletter Editor:  
Shona Duncan  
425-6129

## The Bray .... from Peter Caccia-Birch, Donkey Manager.

All eight donkeys are surviving the winter well, and they are in good health. They are all fed a small portion of hay every day over these winter months. The three foals are growing fast and have good thick winter coats which are keeping them warm, this will not be shed until Summer.

It is really pleasing that they are turning out to be placid and friendly animals. I have led them down to Algies beach several times - with help. One day I would like to get them paddling in the water, but they are reluctant at the moment. This is all part of training them to experience distractive environments which may happen at any time in their lives. Getting them used to barking dogs and other loud noises is also part of their training.

John and I would encourage anyone when approaching the foals to put your hand out, call them by name - Toby, Turvy with the brown ears and almost white Tara - and when they approach you, use slow movements to stroke under their chins or neck areas. It is important to move very SLOWLY and QUIETLY around all the donkeys so as not to frighten them.

Ted, in the front paddock is one big softie. Hopefully he will have his sons for company soon after they are weaned from their mothers.

## MATTERS FINANCIAL

Our Treasurer Ray Harrison, continues to set our membership fee at \$10 per household in the hope that the Society will meet its financial obligations for the donkeys.

But like everything, our expenses are rising. For example with 32 hoofs to tend we will need the services of our farrier more frequently and with eight mouths to feed, the hay stack quickly depletes. Let alone other professional fees and pharmaceuticals as needed for the health and well being of the donkeys.

To this end the Committee feels we need to increase our Membership base and for this we need your help.

We plan a letter drop to all houses in the area, this will include a membership form. We trust that everyone will talk and promote the donkey cause to their neighbours and friends. We are so fortunate to have the donkeys and the reserve. The donkeys are unique and we all enjoy them.

If there is someone out there with other ideas on this subject, the Committee would be pleased to hear from you. Please phone a Committee Member with your ideas so that they may be discussed at our next meeting.

The donkeys are only part of the equation, we thought you would be interested to read about the happenings at Highfield Garden Reserve over the past two months.

The Council contributes to this work and local people, mostly our men folk, complete the projects. This is a great way to meet other like minded people, if you are interested and able to help:

please phone Peter Caccia-Birch 425-6640 - Chair: Highfield Garden Reserve Advisory Committee.

Council Contractors have repaired four different areas of fencing. They have laid and rolled more gravel on the Main Avenue driveway and the London Plane trees have been trimmed. The pathway from the Hayshed to the Algies Steps has been regravelled. . As well we have had Local Board finance approval to complete the concrete pathway in the main donkey paddock.

Volunteers have been busy pruning the fruit trees, replacing the tree surround barriers in the front paddock and have completed the edging in the front garden - Council have supplied materials for both these projects.

There have been 175 native trees and shrubs - ex Council, planted throughout the Reserve. We have had help with the mulching from the Adults in Motion Group. The Weed Busters were active in the Glade area on two occasions. We've completed a weed spraying programme, and added two more wires to the Sanctuary Fence. Cleared tree branches from the Northern Boundary fence and overseen the purchase and storage of 50 bales of hay. Not a bad effort you will agree from Volunteers.

We salute them for their efforts which we all enjoy. Without their work Highfield Garden Reserve would not be the jewel it is today.

As always, we thank you everyone for your support, for shutting the gates, for **FEEDING ONLY SMALL** amounts of apples, carrots or silverbeet to the donkeys, for helping to socialise the animals.

To those members who walk their dogs on leads through the park, you have read the signs, thank you. One dog owner asked about letting their dog off the lead. Regretfully this is not permitted - the Council By Laws state that all dogs must be on a lead in the Reserve area. An unleashed dog could frighten the herd and as well, poison has been laid.

As always, remember to take care near the donkeys, especially young children, they are wild animals!

•Meantime, there are a few Donkey cards available, please phone Sheila Ford for the details.

Diary Notes:

**HIGHFIELD DONKEY CHRISTMAS PARTY  
SATURDAY 12th DECEMBER 2015**

*Shona Duncan  
Editor*

**Highfield Donkeys Incorporated Society**

**Providing care and wellbeing for Teddy, Truffle, Toby, Tara, Tina, Topsy, Turvey,  
& Grandma Tansy at Highfield Garden Reserve.**

**Membership or Renewal: 2015/2016 \$10 per household**

Name/s .....

Contact Address ..... Post Code.....

Telephone..... Mobile .....

Email .....

Signature.....

Post/deliver to L. Cornwell, Membership Secretary, Highfield Donkeys Incorporated,  
483 Mahurangi East Road, Rodney 0920, NZ

Enclosing your cheque payable to:

- Highfield Donkeys Incorporated or
- Direct credit ASB 12-3095 0254516 16-00

(Please ensure you reference the credit with your name and Telephone No.)