

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2012 AT THE OFFICES OF THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL,
388 MAIN SOUTH ROAD, GREYMOUTH, COMMENCING AT 10.30 A.M.**

PRESENT:

R. Scarlett (Chairman), B. Chinn, A. Robb, T. Archer, D. Davidson, A. Birchfield, I. Cummings, J. Douglas

IN ATTENDANCE:

C. Ingle (Chief Executive Officer), R. Mallinson (Corporate Services Manager), M. Meehan (Planning & Environmental Manager), J. Adams (Consents & Compliance Manager), T. Jellyman (Minutes Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Moved (Archer / Robb) *that the apology from F. Tumahai be accepted.*

Carried

Cr Chinn welcomed J. Douglas to the meeting. J. Douglas is the Te Runanga O Makaawhio Representative.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public forum.

1. MINUTES

Moved (Davidson / Birchfield) *that the minutes of the previous Resource Management Committee meeting dated 12 November 2012, be confirmed as correct.*

Carried

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cr Chinn stated that he has nothing significant to report other than a few phone calls he received.

5. REPORTS

5.1 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

5.1.1 PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGER'S MONTHLY REPORT

M. Meehan spoke to his report and advised that two appeals have been received on the Proposed Land and Water Plan with one from Mr Paul Elwell-Sutton and the other from TrustPower. M. Meehan advised that mediation with Mr Elwood-Sutton is scheduled for Friday but a date for TrustPower's mediation is yet to be set.

M. Meehan reported that Mr Jimmy Foster was appointed Chairman of the Reefton Airshed committee at its recent meeting. Air quality scientist; Emily Wilton attended this meeting and answered many questions from the committee on air quality, the NES, why the monitoring site was chosen and a lot of questions about different types of coal in use in Reefton. M. Meehan stated that it was an informative

meeting and it was agreed that a telephone survey be done to follow up on the 2005 telephone survey. M. Meehan reported that a second meeting was held last night and it was reported that the results from the recent telephone survey would be to hand early in the New Year. M. Meehan stated that the committee decided last night to investigate what they would trial for the community for the coming winter.

M. Meehan reported that voluntary farm planning work is progressing well with the major farm in the Lake Haupiri catchment having a farm plan with a three year lifetime plan. He stated that regular catch up meetings with the farm owner to ensure things are on track should lead to an improvement in water quality for this catchment.

M. Meehan reported that staff have begun visiting farms all the farms in the Lake Brunner catchment to assess as to whether or not they want to have a phase II farm plan. M. Meehan reported that to date just under half of the farms in this catchment have been visited and they all seem interested in progressing with the farm plans.

M. Meehan advised that Hamish Fairbairn has been employed as the Wetlands Coordinator in a shared role with Grey District Council. His role is to assist wetland owners to apply for grants to protect their wetlands. M. Meehan advised that H. Fairbairn will also photograph and document schedule 2 wetlands that were over mapped. A couple of locations have already been discovered where this is the case.

Cr Birchfield asked what does the TrustPower appeal relate to. M. Meehan responded that this appeal relates to one particular rule and there are some parts of the appeal that deal with wetlands but these are out of scope. He stated that a report from our lawyer is awaited about what is within the scope of the appeals. C. Ingle stated that he does not feel that this will be difficult to resolve. Cr Chinn asked M. Meehan if there has been much variation in the mapping of the original wetlands H. Fairbairn has investigated to date. M. Meehan responded that there are some areas that are not wetlands but this is because the mapping was done off aerial photos from 2003. There are some areas that are wetlands but it is arguable as to whether or not they are significant wetlands and therefore these wetlands will need an assessment from an Ecologist. Cr Archer stated that it seems amazing that the Environment Court accepted these aerial maps. Cr Archer stated that the current situation means that there are a number of wetlands that aren't wetlands and the council is now going to have to go through the process to verify and prove these are not wetlands so that they can be removed. M. Meehan stated that there are some areas that have been developed since 2003 and definite wetlands that have been identified will be discussed with landowners. M. Meehan advised that in time a plan variation could remove these "non wetlands". C. Ingle stated that H. Fairbairn is being asked to document those wetlands that have been listed as a wetland but are not, or parts of a wetland that is not actually wet. C. Ingle advised that a register of these wetlands would be maintained so that when a consent comes up the register can be used to assist the consent process. C. Ingle advised that the consents officer would be able to ascertain from the register whether or not an Ecologist report will be required. Cr Archer asked when this information would be available. C. Ingle advised that this is now being worked through. C. Ingle stated that it would have been great to have had the perfect information at the start of the plan process and know exactly where the wetlands were and weren't but he feels that where we are at now is not a bad place to be. He stated that we now know that a lot of areas aren't wetlands so most land development can go ahead without the need for consents. Cr Scarlett asked if there was a timeframe for this Plan review. C. Ingle responded that once the RMA changes go through he may be able to proceed with confidence as then there will be a more streamlined planning process. M. Meehan advised that there are 270 landowners affected and a good number of them have already requested a visit from H. Fairbairn. C. Ingle offered to provide a report from H. Fairbairn in April next year to review where things are at. Cr Chinn stated this is a hot topic and it will be good to keep a good eye on this.

Moved (Archer / Cummings) *that Council receive this report.*

Carried

5.1.2 CONTACT RECREATION MONITORING REPORT

M. Meehan spoke to this report advising that this is the first round of sampling with the December round now having just commenced. Cr Archer stated that this is an outstanding result with so many green, happy smiling faces in this report.

Moved (Archer / Scarlett) *That Council receive this report.*

Carried

5.1.3 THIRD REPORT OF THE LAND AND WATER FORUM

M. Meehan spoke to this report advising that this forum was established in 2009 and over the past three years the Forum has built up a substantial network of key stakeholders who have been brought into this group to work through some of the issues. M. Meehan advised that the first report came out in 2010 which set out a blueprint for freshwater management and this was one of the things that resulted in the NPS for freshwater, which was released in May 2011. He stated that two multimillion dollar funds were created, one for irrigation infrastructure and one to accelerate environmental restoration. M. Meehan advised that Council is waiting on the outcome of its application to this fund for environmental projects on Lake Brunner. M. Meehan reported that the second report was released in April 2012 and contained 38 recommendations. The third report was released in October 2012 and contains 67 recommendations and builds on the first two reports. He explained recommendations contained in the third report to the meeting. M. Meehan stated that work that has been done in Lake Brunner already covers a lot of these recommendations. M. Meehan advised that water allocation is not a big issue for us but there is potential for work in the Grey Valley with irrigators being installed in parts of this catchment. M. Meehan advised that the forum has made recommendations around Section 32 analysis that is undertaken when undergoing plan reviews. The forum is recommending a greater central government role to provide guidance to regional councils. M. Meehan advised that the forum would meet again in July 2013 to assess the Government's response. He stated that the Government is meeting to discuss the report and where to from here. M. Meehan advised that for this council, we have already met a lot of the obligations around the NPS with work done for Lake Brunner but work may be required for the Grey Valley area and other areas where there are some future irrigation pressures.

Cr Archer asked M. Meehan if there are any potential ramifications including financial ramifications for this council. M. Meehan advised that water quality is very good in the West Coast region and that where water quality was declining in the Lake Brunner catchment, action has been taken through the Land and Water Plan. M. Meehan advised that he does not see any major financial ramifications for this council. C. Ingle advised that there are some alarming signals around NIWA monitoring being withdrawn, the implication being a cost shift from central government to local government for state of the environment and flood warning monitoring. However this was not directly related to the Land and Water Plan.

Moved (Robb / Scarlett) *That Council receives this report.*

Carried

5.1.4 FUNDING ASSISTANCE RATES (FAR) REVIEW UPDATE

C. Ingle spoke to this report advising that this is an update from NZTA relating to funding. C. Ingle advised that this is another scenario where central government may be looking to cost shift onto local government. At the moment local government gets a 50% subsidy for Total Mobility funding and it is looking as though is being reviewed. C. Ingle advised that more will be found out about this in March / April next year and Council will get a chance to have a say and then decisions will be made.

Moved (Robb / Cummings) *That Council receives this report.*

Carried

5.2 CONSENTS AND COMPLIANCE GROUP

5.2.1 CONSENTS MONTHLY REPORT

J. Adams spoke to his report advising that 28 non-notified resource consents were granted during November. He advised that six consent variations were granted and one limited notified resource consent. J. Adams reported that Buller Coal Ltd Environment Court hearing was held in Greymouth but is now back in Christchurch. He advised that the hearing will continue again on Monday and Tuesday of next week before concluding. J. Adams reported that mediation with TrustPower took place on the 26th of November in relation to the Kaniere Forks and McKay's Creek hydro schemes. He advised that all parties have now come to an agreement and a draft consent order has been presented to the Environment Court. J. Adams advised that the Grey River Dredge consent application has been declined. J. Adams advised that at the Commissioner's Report for the Preston Road treatment plant has now been released and as yet there have been no appeals received.

Moved (Robb / Archer) *That the December 2012 report of the Consents Group be received.*

Carried

5.2.2 COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

J. Adams spoke to this report advising that there were 16 complaints / incidents reported during the month but of these 10 of these were found to be either unsubstantiated or there was a consent in place to cover this. J. Adams advised that formal enforcement action was taken in three cases and two are ongoing investigations. J. Adams advised that the oil spill onto the road at Dobson was the result of a motor vehicle accident and the company involved has paid for the clean up of this area. J. Adams reported that five work programmes for mining have been submitted during the reporting period and three bonds were received as well. Cr Birchfield drew attention to the serial complainants at Awatuna and Ross both of which were unsubstantiated. Cr Scarlett stated that dairy shed inspection compliance is a little confusing as it could be interpreted to mean that just over 50% of dairy sheds are fully compliant. J. Adams clarified the way the report is made up. Cr Scarlett is mindful that the public could be alarmed and think that dairy non-compliance is a bigger problem than it actually is. C. Ingle advised that regional councils around the country already have a grading system of either non-compliant or significantly non-compliant and it is the significantly non-compliance where there is an actual environmental effect resulting from a non-compliance. C. Ingle advised that the format of the report could be changed for the February meeting. Cr Chinn stated that dairy farms in the Lake Brunner catchment should not be reported on because of the plan change. C. Ingle advised that the dairy farms in the Lake Brunner catchment could be reported in a separate section.

Moved (Archer / Robb) *That the December 2012 report for the Compliance Group be received.*

Carried

6.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no general business.

The meeting closed at 11.28 a.m.

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Chairman

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Date