



PUBLIC COPY

AGENDA

Meeting of the Westport Rating District Joint Committee

Wednesday 4 May 2022
commencing at 1.00pm

To be held via Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions
and
Live streamed via the West Coast Regional Council's Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/WestCoastRegionalCouncil>

Membership of the Westport Rating District Joint Committee:

Chairperson: Hugh McMillan

Members:

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|-----------------------|---|
| Allan Birchfield | Chair, West Coast Regional Council |
| Jamie Cleine | Mayor, Buller District Council |
| Laura Coll McLaughlin | West Coast Regional Council – Buller constituency |
| John Hill | West Coast Regional Council – Buller constituency |
| Phil Rutherford | Buller District Council |
| Jo Howard | Buller District Council |
| Francois Tumahai | Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Waewae |
| James Caygill | Waka Kotahi NZTA |
| Dan Moloney | Westport area community representative |
| Jodi Murray | Westport area community representative |

Westport Rating District Joint Committee

1. Welcome (*Haere mai*)
2. Apologies (*Ngā Pa Pouri*)
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Confirmation of Minutes (*Whakau korero*)
 - Joint Committee Meeting 11 April 2022
 - Matters Arising

Reports

5. Shift in priorities for flood protection (M. Gardener – verbal)
6. Matters of community interest (D. Moloney)
7. General Business

H. Mabin
Chief Executive
West Coast Regional Council

S. Mason
Chief Executive
Buller District Council

Minutes of the Westport Rating District Joint Committee

Monday 11 April 2022 – 1.00pm

By Zoom and livestreamed via West Coast Regional Council

Present:

Hugh McMillan (Chair), Allan Birchfield (Chair, West Coast Regional Council), Jamie Cleine (Mayor, Buller District Council), Laura Coll McLaughlin (Clr, West Coast Regional Council), John Hill (Clr, West Coast Regional Council), Phil Rutherford (Clr, Buller District Council), Jo Howard (Clr, Buller District Council), Dan Moloney (Westport Area Community Representative), Jodi Murray (Westport Area Community Representative), James Caygill (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency)

Apologies:

Heather Mabin (Chief Executive, West Coast Regional Council)

In attendance:

Sharon Mason (Chief Executive, Buller District Council), Randal Beal (Staff, West Coast Regional Council), John Hutchings (Henley Hutchings), Nichola Costley (Staff, West Coast Regional Council), Rachel Vaughan (West Coast Regional Council) Tayla Carson (Landmark Lile)

1. Welcome

F. Tumahi opened the meeting with a karakia. Chair McMillan welcomed members to the meeting

2. Apologies

Moved (J. Caygill /Clr Howard) that these apologies be accepted.

Carried

3. Declarations of interest

Asked for any additional declarations of interest to those noted at the last meeting.

Moved (Clr Coll-McLaughlin/Mayor Cleine) that these declarations be noted.

Carried

4. Confirmation of minutes

Moved (Clr Rutherford/D. Moloney) that the Joint Committee adopt the minutes of the Westport Rating District Joint Committee meeting on 3 March 2022.

Carried

Matters arising

No matters arising.

5. Update on recommended emergency works

R. Beal provided an update on the recommended emergency works that the Joint Committee approved at the last meeting. Council has approved, in principle all of the works identified, however they have requested further financial information as this is work additional to what had been consulted on. Geo-tech investigations will be undertaken by Davis Ogilvy. The contract is currently with the WCRC CE for signing. Work will commence in May with a report back end of May.

Organ's Island realignment. Have a draft realignment to proof this Wednesday as part of the TAG. The TAG will also review the draft modelling runs completed by Land, River Sea on Thursday.

Chair Birchfield said that he had the impression the rockwork was to start quickly and questioned the delay. R. Beal said that the Council wanted accurate budget to approve the works. Chair Birchfield noted his disappointment and will raise this at Council tomorrow to try and push this on.

Mayor Cleine sought clarity that the project would go out to tender for this work and this would firm up the costs for the Regional Council? R. Beal said this was correct. Council has estimated budgets but if going to look at the total impact then not talking about just these emergency works but also the new information that came through in March which includes the representative concentration pathways (RCPs) – these options are discussed in later reports. There are bottom line implications that will result from the final decision.

Clr Coll-McLaughlin questioned the geotechnical investigations that are necessary. Would like to see some pace but understand that if going to do it have to do it right. With regard to the Orowaiti overflow by Organs Island, what geo-tech investigation is occurring here? Have decades of knowledge that the rock there does its job. At the moment with the break Westport is at risk. R. Beal explained that the geo-technical works is related to the stage 1 works proposed. The Organs Island/Overflow we needed the draft alignment which now have, but it also requires ground-truthing which is what the TAG will be doing on Wednesday. Clr Coll-McLaughlin said that there is a lot of community interest in the Overflow. Recognise that it is an urgent piece of work which is different to the new stopbanks.

Clr Rutherford said that it was unclear what works were talking about in this paper but it now appears to addressing the requirements to start the floodwall construction. R. Beal explained that the report focuses on the Davis Ogilvy work to prepare for stage 1 – new stopbank from Toki Bridge. The Organs Island verbal update is separate and this is the work will be doing in person on Wednesday.

Clr Howard said that need to ensure that follow the correct tender process so there is a clear financial budget. R. Beal wanted to clarify that when engineers put up emergency work recommendations, these works are done primarily on an hourly rate as it needs to be done immediately due to threatening property or create major hazard risks in the time it takes to go through a tender process. The way this is managed internally is that it is not fair to ask contractors to give us any more than an estimate. We work in partnership with the contractor and manage any issues as they arise. It is a different process to putting out full design and volumes for a contract to tender.

Chair McMillan clarified that if the works are designated as emergency works then they are undertaken at an hourly rate but this is to be done through a full tender process. R. Beal explained that in order to do the work with a full understanding of budget implications then have to go through a tender process. Chair McMillan asked whether it is now not considered as emergency works? R. Beal said that under the implications/risks in the report, staff still believe the same level of risk exists.

In terms of hourly rate versus tendered rate, without the geo-tech information cannot give them the information they need to know dig out quantities etc., which is a large part of the cost.

Chair Birchfield said that he thought this work was urgent. Get the rock pulled back and the new rock put in place. Get it done as per the hourly rate. Have been doing this type of work for years. Can't see there being much difference. Want to see the work undertaken as emergency works and done by the hour if have too. Chair McMillan asked whether needed to go back to the Regional Council and emphasis that these are emergency works. R. Beal said that it was very to staff that the Organ's Island work needs to be proceeded with immediately. Staff will use their delegations process to get three quotes and get on with it. There is a Council meeting tomorrow that could ask Council for delegated approval to get that underway.

Clr Coll-McLaughlin believe the holdup for the overflow is the alignment. This work stream is in play, and once the alignment is confirmed then can proceed with seeking the quotes to undertake this work. Fears have been allayed in that the urgency to get the works done is recognised by staff.

R. Beal asked whether the Joint Committee want the final alignment and the quotes back to the Committee before presenting to Council. Chair McMillan said that at the last meeting they voted to get these works completed and this still stands. Once have the information then the work is proceed with as per the mandate from the last meeting. S. Mason suggested the Regional Council Chief Executive to clarify offline the process with emergency works going forward.

Clr Howard clarified the two processes (tender and an hourly rate). What are the differences in the two approaches to the timeframe? R. Beal explained that are talking about two different pieces of works. Building the flood protection structure including with geo-tech investigation and design should be done through a tender, Organs Island is a more quantifiable project which can be priced on the site and believe they would be comfortable to provide estimated prices with some tender tags for the unknowns at the time of tendering.

Clr Coll-McLaughlin noted that she has had some contact with local contractors that have been watching the project with interest. Emphasise that need to make this process as robust and transparent as possible. There may be a need for more than three or a weighted consideration for local contractors.

Mayor Cleine said that need to be careful as to the role of this Committee as talking about decisions the Regional Council need to make around their table. Have made it clear that the Organs Island work is urgent and the Toki Bridge work is less urgent and can run through a more thorough process. Regional Council has the tools to progress this.

S. Mason pointed out that need to be careful as to who has the authority to make decisions in terms of which committee. Unsure of the Regional Council's procurement policy, but will need to consider urgency of undertaking the works, value to ratepayers and weigh up between progressing with an hourly rate or going for an RFP.

Chair McMillan summarized that this is a Regional Council decision. Recommended at the last meeting the proposal for emergency works. The Regional Council said yes but want some costs around that. The work that is required to support this has been identified. There is a Council meeting tomorrow so we leave it to them.

Moved (Mayor Cleine/Clr Howard) that the Joint Committee resolve to note this report

Carried

6. Drainage and culverts report

R. Beal presented the report. Investigations into improving drainage of flood waters have been undertaken. Believe that drainage issues need to be addressed as the same time as looking at flood protection structures. These would need to be truthed with the final design and alignment.

Clr Birchfield stated that internal drainage is an issue and asked who has this responsibility for this. R. Beal said that he does not believe that the main arterial drains are being maintained by anyone. This does not include private farm drains. Clr Birchfield asked who was going to do this work. R. Beal said that this needs to be part of what is considered. Not talking just about culverts but also flood gates and stop bank inflows.

Mayor Cleine said that he does not think can separate these and needs to be considered as part of the overall planning. Mayor Cleine queried what would an approximate cost of this work be? R. Beal said that this information would be brought back to the Joint Committee once have confirmed final design and RCP's and better understand the cost implications. Thirty-one additional culvert, as well as one way flaps, this will not be cheap. Mayor Cleine stated that there is absolutely no way can have one without the other.

Clr Coll-McLaughlin said that it was good to be having the discussion about drainage and flood protection because as pointed out cannot have one without the other. For something like this scheme where there is a Rating District and a targeted rate and are considering bringing in drainage, there is arbitrary delineation of responsibility of duties for stormwater maintenance between the District Council and Regional Council. If we were to be rating for some form of stormwater maintenance – is it possible, and does it require a transfer of duties? R. Beal said this is a matter for the two the Councils to determine. Consider how it is currently being rated for, work already in a work programme and who is best placed to manage it. If additional to what is already in place needs to be a discussion as to who is best placed to do it and manage it. Have had comments that drainage and flood protection go hand in hand. Provided it isn't urban stormwater Council should definitely be having that conversation.

Clr Rutherford stated that has a concern around stormwater management. If the RPC 6 is the preferred model, there will be huge implications for our low-lying coastal areas through sea-level rises. This has been discussed in one of the previous papers and how will impact on flood protection. One of the impacts of sea level rise will be groundwater levels. There are parts of Westport that fall within the area of the floodwalls, seeking comment as to the implications of dealing with stormwater from low-lying areas, subject to increased groundwater levels as can easily be in the situation of pumping the ocean back into the ocean. R. Beal said that have just received the NIWA advice in mid-March so are currently not in a situation to make a comment on it at the moment. P. Birchfield said that any water pushing up would not be flowing quickly. Would need to have some robust pumps in place. Clr Rutherford clarified that was not referring to the level of water in the river but the increase in sea level will contribute to groundwater levels and this will impact some of our low-lying areas of Westport close to the sea. This water will have to be constantly pumped out and want to know how this is being considered as part of the floodwall design. Clr Birchfield stated that the sea level would not rise and to not worry about it.

Clr Howard noted her concern around the drains and culverts and the environmental impacts. Is there consideration in the design about fish passage? The Cats Creek area is affected by the push from the

tide. Any time there has been drain clearance this has resulted in sediment and whether need to encourage planting of reeds or grasses to stabilize the Orowaiti bed.

D. Moloney said there has been huge amount of interest from the community in drains and culverts. Some clarity around who is responsible for what will help. There has been a suggestion whether the angle of the drains would assist with water not being pushed back up? P. Birchfield have had students from Canterbury University to consider the vortex effect. However there is not a lot of flow against the bank so in a flood, the fastest flow is in the centre so unfortunately this does not work.

J. Murray clarified whether any new drains and culverts added to the system would be covered by the Rating District, but queried what should already be being maintained? R. Beal commented that the Regional Council does not have a rate struck to maintain the drains identified in the paper so this work would be additional to what was consulted on if the decision was made for the Regional Council to deliver on this. S. Mason said that Buller District Council looks after the stormwater and wastewater and there is a maintenance package currently there. Wanted to pull this back to a more strategic level which is for the two Councils to develop a complementary design package that encompasses stormwater, wastewater and flood protection. That design package will form part of the application to go to government. There will need to be 'skin in the game' from both Councils and do not lose sight that there is the bigger programme of works around the three waters reform. This will look quite different as the existing drain and stormwater system is not set up

J. Hutchings noted the importance of any drains and stormwater systems, particularly where they interface with a flood protection scheme structure, need to be costed and designed up. Will need to consider where these assets lie in the three waters management and flood management area.

Moved (Clr Hill/Clr Rutherford) that the Joint Committee resolve to receive this report.

Carried

7. Land tenure investigations update

Chris Coll was unable to join the Committee meeting today, R. Beal presented it on his behalf. Have been reviewing the land tenure for the areas that were identified at the last meeting for emergency works.

Clr Birchfield queried what area this referred to. R. Beal clarified that this is the Organs Island area, O'Connor Home and down to the Toki Bridge area. Clr Birchfield said that it was probably better to bring this up to the Council meeting tomorrow to proceed with these works with urgency.

Clr Coll-McLaughlin said that this is a topic that have been asked a number of questions about. Excited that are at this point. Believe it is one of the trickiest part of the process and how to manage this.

Clr Rutherford stated that this will have implications for final cost outcomes and will be keen to see what these implications are once they have been determined.

Moved (Clr Birchfield /Clr Coll-McLaughlin) that the Joint Committee resolve to receive this report.

Carried

8. Land River Sea modelling investigations update

R. Beal noted that M. Gardener was an apology today. This is an update on the progress made in the modelling space since the last meeting. Have been working to include in the modelling the new science received in March. R. Beal said that RCP 6 is most likely to be recommended by the TAG, but they are

considering all the options before the final recommendation is made to the Committee. R. Beal discussed some of the various models and implications. Part of this is likely to be proceeding with what was consulted on last year but allowing for an increase in height in the future to cater to impacts of sea level rise. When looking at the various options there are some significant implications that come up. These need to be assessed and are all draft investigations at the moment. Should the airport, identified as a critical asset, is to be moved there are limited locations for where it can go. Would like further discussion on option 6. Identified that for Carters Beach and the current location of the airport, would want to extend the floodwall to the Buller on the true left. The airport is a critical lifeline and the modelling showed that this was likely to be needed. Once have confirmed a recommendation will need to sit down with individual property owners, including those outside of the scheme, to consider the implications and coming up with solutions to those issues. The TAG also raised that there is a need to consider a future location for the airport. This needs to be progressed so land can be protected under the planning rules.

Mayor Cleine said that it is clear that there are implications across the scenarios and it is good to see these being assessed. From his local knowledge looked as if the Snodgrass Cut was a winner. R. Beal noted that he had neglected to discuss the Snodgrass cut. Are doing the modelling for it. It does have potential for the short term but would require bridging.

Clr Coll-McLaughlin thanked R. Beal for the work he has been doing. Pleased that have a lot of options to look at. Found people thought the LTP consultation was the final alignment. Instead this was getting the mandate from the community to progress a flood protection scheme. With regard to the timelines, will the TAG bring options back to the Joint Committee in April or May? R. Beal explained that Wednesday is critical for considering a number of matters. Believe that are on track to have a final alignment for the business case. Clr Coll-McLaughlin asked about the Orowaiti causeway and the embankment are a real issue, have NZTA and KiwiRail been brought into these conversations and aware of these options. R. Beal said that they are aware of what looking but have not had an in-person meeting with them yet. Once have final alignment confirmed will be able to progress this.

Clr Hill asked that if M. Gardner is available next month it would be good to have him attend the meeting and speak further to it particularly in regards to the RCP. R. Beal said that it would be expected to be included in the design package that central government would contribute too.

Clr Rutherford raised concerns around the various RCP that have been considered. BDC have been working on some of this internally with the Council coming up with a climate change adaptation strategy. Would hope that all of the different impacts will be factored into the various models e.g. increased stormwater, drainage etc. R. Beal said that there is always an option, if allow for this at the start of the project, to be able to raise the height of the structure. This assists with the affordability of the project. May not go the extra 300mm now due to budgetary, or other reasons, but as long as allow for future height increases that is the best can aim for for the future. Clr Rutherford said that it was not the height he was concerned about but whether the other factors of stormwater and drainage had been considered and the effects the various scenarios could have on the scheme. R. Beal clarified that with the various scenarios looking at, need to get the base and width right. Cannot add height if do not get this right. Once have this right then believe that stormwater matters will be future-proofed. Buller District Council engineers are involved in the TAG and will be able to provide more information around stormwater management.

Clr Howard requested more information on RCP6 around the airport location and how much would flood protection extend the life for this asset and what is the timeline for the impact for sea level rise for the airport. With technology improvements will an airport with runways be required in the future.

Matters to consider for future strategic planning. R. Beal said that this has been discussed by the TAG. Believe that it will not be an incremental rate of rise but more likely to be in fits and starts. The airport is a critical lifeline for a number of reasons. Would be surprised if did not recommend Carters Beach to be extended as per the map on page 31. In terms of the timeline that will be part of the cost benefit analysis. Difficult to put a date as to when the level of protection can no longer be achieved.

J. Murray stated that it was good to see the different models and scenarios being run. It will be a challenge to get the right height, the incremental increase to wall height is a good idea.

Moved (J. Murray/D. Moloney) that the Joint Committee resolve to receive this report.

Carried

9. Business case for central government support - update

J. Hutchings provided a progress report on the business case development. Confident that can deliver this within the timeframe.

Clr Birchfield queried the affordability of the whole thing. Made a suggestion that funding could come also come from Development West Coast.

Clr Coll-McLaughlin has been considering the question as to why Westport is 'special'. Is there an option for some form of integrated catchment management to slow down the flow of water from its source. J. Hutchings responded that there is a lot of indigenous vegetation and this approach is unlikely to occur in comparison to catchment areas of urban or arable land.

Clr Hill wanted to thank J. Hutchings that the report is on track. It is up to the Joint Committee to reassure the community that there is a lot going on and progress is being made. Chair McMillan agreed that there is a lot of work that is happening, can see from the agenda how much has happened. The final part will be the building of the walls which won't happen tomorrow but when done needs to be done correctly.

Clr Rutherford asked whether by the time the final plan comes to be submitted will there be additional costs attached to it? Given that will then know more about these costs and how will they fit into the Regional Council's Annual Plan process. Will it require further consultation given there are ratepayers that sit outside the protected area. What is the potential for things to change if significantly different to the LTP? J. Hutchings answered that the Regional Council had tested a scheme and landed on \$10.2 million. The impact of the storms in February, as well as the hangover of impacts from last year, will have an impact. Will need to look at the cost implications and effects, and the level of affordability going forward.

Clr Howard said that she would like to see more financial information being brought to this table. Not just for the big-ticket items but also the costs incurred through the design work. Generally everything that is balanced against the Special Rating District.

Moved (Clr Birchfield/D. Moloney) that the Joint Committee resolve to receive this report.

Carried

10. District plan designations for Westport protection works

R. Vaughan, Acting Planning and Science Manager for the Regional Council presented the report on designations for protection infrastructure. Applying the designation for these works and once work

was given effect to, would be able to lift some of the flood protection zoning requirements and make things more lenient.

Clr Birchfield stated that he was concerned that Te Tai o Poutini Plan (TTPP) would restrict the building of the flood protection structure compared to now. R. Vaughan explained that it was not necessarily just the TTPP that could restrict construction. It could also be other legislation. A designation would allow for this work to be undertaken even if there were legislation changes. It is a strategic tool and guarantees this protection structure in the future.

Mayor Cleine asked what the difference was between consultation for a designation as opposed to a resource consent. R. Vaughan explained that for a designation to be added to a plan then there is a consultation process around this. For any future works, or extension, then they are not subject to a further notification process. Mayor Cleine asked how people would be consulted with given do not currently have a final alignment. R. Vaughan explained that would not go down the designation process yet as the details on alignment and land tenure have not yet been finalized.

Clr Coll-Mclaughlin queried the resolution. As it stands at the moment is to insert a designation in the BDC Plan and then the TTPP. Optimistic that would get it in the BDC Plan but may get it in the TTPP. Thinking of the funding of the work to do this. It is a BDC specific project and how should this be funded. Would be uncomfortable in approving this without having a resolution from BDC ensuring that everyone involved is involved. R. Vaughan responded that there is a change to the resolution. The Order in Council that requires the Regional Council to be responsible for district plan functions too. The Order in Council does not apply to designation process but for planning. The designation process allows the Regional Council to process it if the Schedule 1 process is used. If the designation process is agreed by this Committee, then the designation will be part of the TTPP process, otherwise it would need to be processed by BDC.

Clr Rutherford noted his support of the suggestion. It looks as if this will help with expediting the construction of the walls once know alignment. Concerned at potential costs falling on BDC. Believe concerns raised around risk are probably at the low end of the scale as those interested in this are likely to be those interested in the whole scheme itself.

Clr Howard wanted to check the query of the note in the paper. Concerned that this decision would need to go back to the Buller District Council. R. Vaughan explained that this has been discussed within the Planners group as part of the TTPP process. The Schedule 1 process allows it to be processed as part of the TTPP process. The other pathway in the RMA is for designations outside of the planning process when there is already an operative plan. Because there is a plan in this process it would be expedient putting it through this process. J. Cleine said that he was satisfied that their planning team were all over this as part of the hazardscape planning and that it would flow through the TTPP process.

Clr Howard questioned the consultation process. R. Vaughan explained that this would be notified as part of the TTPP process. Any affected parties such as landowners would be individually notified if they were directly affected as well public adverts in the papers. More than just the public process.

Moved (Clr Birchfield/J. Murray) that the Joint Committee resolve to:

1. receive this report;
2. direct the Regional Council to lodge a notice of requirement to insert a designation in the Buller District Plan, and subsequently TTPP, for all parts of the protection works.

Carried

11. Matters of community interest

D. Moloney presented feedback received from the community. Some of the matters highlighted have been addressed in the reports presented to the Committee. The matters identified highlight the issue of who is responsible for the creeks that run through the various properties. R. Beal explained that there is no rating district set up for the maintenance of these pathways. As raised in a previous paper there could be an option to include these areas. Council had released information following the February event for farmers on what could be done to protect land.

Clr Birchfield noted his thanks to R. Beal and the work he has done.

Clr Coll-McLaughlin said that have had people make contact about the damage that has occurred post July and February. It is upsetting not to have many options to help. The Engineers have provided a lot of good advice but we cannot bring in machinery and rock. Have had concern raised where works upstream have not adhered to their consented conditions. The Regional Council does have a role in this space. For acts of God and natural disasters, there does not feel like there is much Council can do. Unfortunately, just do not have the budget to do much more than provide advice.

Clr Rutherford wanted to thank D. Moloney for keeping his finger on the pulse of the community. Want to thank R. Beal on behalf of the community for the work he has done. Clr Howard reiterated this thanks to R. Beal.

Moved (Clr Coll-McLaughlin /Clr Howard) that the Joint Committee resolve to receive this report.

Carried

12. General Business

Mayor Cleine sought clarity on the handover for R. Beal going forward. R. Beal explained that in regards to the TAG, the sponsor for the TAG will change to either J. Hutchings, M. Gardener or C. Coll. They all have experience and existing relationships in place. As long as the TAG work does not stall then this will protect the project going forward.

Chair McMillan officially expressed his thanks on behalf of the Committee for Randal's work on this project. Personally believe that good progress is being made and this project is moving ahead.

Meeting closed at 2.56

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| Report to: Westport Rating District Joint Committee | Meeting Date: 4 May 2022 |
| Title of Item: Matters of community interest | |
| Report by: Dan Moloney | |
| Reviewed by: Hugh McMillan | |
| Public excluded? No | |

Report Purpose

To provide the Joint Committee with an update on matters of community interest.

Report Summary

Community interest in the Westport Flood Protection scheme is high with much commentary on the topic, and other matters related to the causes of flooding.

Draft Recommendations

It is recommended that the Joint Committee resolve to receive this report.

Issues and Discussion

Current situation

Feedback from the community has been monitored. The Buller River Flood Protection Action Group made the following comments:

"If you are at all interested in the Harbour and early flood protection works then this is the book. It was prepared by Charlie Douthett and is a brilliant resource. We are very fortunate to have it.
<http://ketewestcoast.peoplesnetworknz.info/site/documents/show/298-westport-port-history-1968-revised-edition>

It is quite a document but look for Number 30 and read on.

The recent comments in regard to the time frame for the flood protection works to begin has caused great concern within the community. The community fully realize the damage done in previous floods and are acutely aware that even a medium size flood could have a devastating effect on their homes and properties. While I understand due process this is an emergency situation and, at the present time, both councils seem to be content to wait. If money is a problem just be aware the Minister for Climate Change, James Shaw, was quoted this week as saying that doing nothing is the most expensive option of all.

An alternative for action might be that a working bee is organized to give the community the opportunity to do some stream clearances on a voluntary basis. A good place to start might be below the Mill Street Culvert, which as you can see from the photo is heavily overgrown and has logs, dead willows and iron strewn across it. The next heavy rainfall would more than likely cause it to dam up with water flooding across the road and into neighbouring properties.

An 8am start on a Saturday morning with an experienced digger driver and a couple of trucks could see that section cleared with all volunteers in the pub by 11 to replace the sweat of their labours."