



NEWSLETTER – Spring 2012

Greetings Friends!!

What with all that's been going on, it's time for one of our periodic newsletters, so read on....

A GREAT BIG WIN!

In case you've been away and haven't yet heard, Friends of Willunga Basin and our community partners have had one of the biggest and most significant wins ever for our district with the recent passage of the McLaren Vale Protection Bill – which seeks to preserve the amenity and character of the Basin and, in particular, to prevent land division for residential purposes.

The new Act is expected to come into effect in January, and importantly, at this time, most of the former Development Plan policy settings, including those relating to the development of dwellings on existing allotments, will revert to their previous form. Crucially, the building of a home on an existing rural property will no longer be non complying.

The icing on the cake is the removal of a requirement that town boundaries be reviewed every 5 years, which was causing us concern in light of how quickly time passes these days.

As it stands, the boundaries of the district will now be locked down and it will take an act of Parliament to remove or alter the new level of protection that has been afforded.

This is the culmination of a long journey, and a seminal moment for Willunga Basin and for our group. Particular acknowledgement goes to David Gill, Chas Martin and other members who have worked so long and hard to achieve this wonderful outcome. John Lawrie must not be forgotten as the main driver of the need for legislated protection over many years. We must also acknowledge the efforts and contributions of both Leon Bignell and Rob Brokenshire, whose work has been essential to all that has been achieved.

MEMBERSHIP

While we're banging the drum, what better way to demonstrate the manifest benefits of membership of Friends of Willunga Basin!

Accompanying this newsletter is a membership renewal form for the period 1 July 2012 to 31 June, 2013. Fees have been retained as \$8.00 for singles, \$10.00 family and \$6.00 concession. You are invited and encouraged to return your application and membership fee to the address shown on the form post haste.

Not only that, but there is always strength in numbers and, like any organization, we need to maintain ours in order to maintain the full strength and carry of our voice. FOWB's current membership is around 70 and could be enhanced, so please copy this form to pass it on to others whom you think might be interested or willing to join up. One here, one there, and we'll soon be back over 100. Do your best...

FOWB COMMITTEE FOR 2012/13

At the AGM held on 26th September, a new Committee was elected, comprising:-

Geoff Hayter, David Gill, Jerry Keyte, Jim Fletcher, Rob Bickford, Pierre Rosenberg, Chris Davies and Stephanie Walker. Don Chapman remains the nominated Council contact person.

At its first meeting of 10th October, the committee filled its various positions, with Geoff Hayter appointed as Chair, David Gill as Secretary and Rob Bickford as Treasurer. Margie Keath has kindly agreed to continue acting as Minute Secretary.

Please note that all members are welcome to attend our regular meetings, which are held at 7.30pm on the second Wednesday of each month in the Willunga Environment Centre.

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

Friends of Willunga Basin has a full agenda for the coming year.

The McLaren Vale Protection Bill

Although the Bill has passed, there is still a good deal of work to be done to ensure that the Development Plan Amendment that must follow faithfully reflects the intentions of the Bill and that its legislative provisions are translated into good planning policy. This will be a major item of business over the coming 12 months.

Walking Trail and Bike Tracks

Chris Davies and Zara Lupton are working on the plotting of a 100Km walking trail around Willunga basin. The trail is being designed to provide a circuit linking the coastal area of Port Willunga and Aldinga Scrub to Willunga and then on across the top of the range to Onkaparinga Gorge. As far as possible the route traverses back roads and unused public roads, although there will be a couple of stretches of private property to navigate.

At the same time, we are also agitating for improvements to the local bike trail network, particularly between Willunga and Pt Willunga.

We have already engaged with Council, which is about to launch a 5 yearly review of its recreational trails strategy and we plan to be at the front of the line.

Townships

Various plans are being prepared by Council for some of our local townships, including Willunga and Aldinga Village.

At Willunga, and following a recent survey of community opinion, Council is due to report back on plans for the proposed enhancement of the streetscape in High Street.

Similarly, at Aldinga, first iteration thoughts and plans have been tabled for public comment and FOWB has requested advice from Council regarding its proposed next steps.

It is possible that further community consultation will be required on both of these schemes and FOWB will be maintaining an active watching brief on their progress to ensure that the community remains fully involved at all steps along the way.

The Washpool

Consistent with the history of the organization, we maintain a close watching brief and a good working relationship with Council on matters relating to the Washpool and the Aldinga Scrub, where there continue to be a number of activities relating to stormwater management and urban encroachment. Thanks to Chas Martin for his ongoing efforts on this front.

Aldinga Airfield

Aldinga Airfield has become something of a hot topic in recent months on account of apparent changes to the nature of its operations and an increase in aircraft movements. We support the airfield in its current guise, but are concerned that it may be in the process of stepping operations up to a level that was never envisaged when the original agreements were struck several decades ago.

The Committee will shortly be seeking a meeting with Mayor Lorraine Rosenberg to discuss, among other things, an update on current issues around the airfield. This will be made available through the website as soon as available.

FUTURE STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES

While the Committee has a range of ideas on what our priorities should be over the next 12 to 18 months, it would assist us greatly to have any opinions or views from the membership. These might range from broad spectrum to the specific.

Ideas that have already come forward for consideration include:

- venturing into environmental areas such as the health and condition of the principal creeks in the Basin;
- further strengthening our partnerships with kindred organisations holding similar views to FOWB so as to increase our collective effectiveness, particularly on major issues;
- development of a sustainability review group
- Our continued letter writing on broader state and national issues such as the public transport, the Murray Darling Basin, the proposed weakening of federal environmental powers by handing over to the states.
- Tours to visit other areas within the State to stimulate new ideas and refresh our approach. Suggestions include a geological tour of the abandoned sand pits at Maslins and a visit to the Tennyson Sand Dunes.

Please contact the Secretary, David Gill on 8556 289 or at info@fowb.net to add your ideas and suggestions.

COMMUNICATING OUR MESSAGE

Looking ahead, we propose that the main source of FOWB news will be through our website – www.fowb.net – with minutes of meetings and other relevant material to be posted on a regular basis. However, we are still proposing periodic Newsletters to draw your attention to recent FOWB highlights and current activities.

We are also hoping to step up the content and presentation of the website in the near future to enable it to become a greater resource than it currently is and to allow members to provide feedback and to comment electronically. We would welcome hearing from any member who might be willing and able to manage and enhance the site on a low key but ongoing basis.