

Friends of Willunga Basin inc.

PO Box 710, Willunga. Chair: Geoff Hayter Secretary: David Gill, Tel 08 85562289 info@fowb.net

WELCOME, FRIENDS

Newsletter Autumn 2016

Your committee is continuing its high level of activity, dealing with all manner of matters across the Willunga Basin.

WILLUNGA BASIN TRAIL: WE'RE UP AND WALKING!



The Willunga Basin Trail is a 100km walking circuit of the Basin, from the hills to the coast, and from the Onkaparinga River to Sellicks.

On Tuesday 9th February, the Working Group chairman, Chris Davies, presented our plan for the Willunga Basin Trail to Onkaparinga Council at its monthly meeting. We are very pleased to announce to members that Council endorsed the strategy unanimously. This means that the Trail will now become part of Council's Trails Strategy.

It also means that the working group can now:

- proceed with incorporation of a new body to take carriage of the project; and
- start applying for funding, which will be needed to cover the cost of materials.

By becoming an incorporated body, the current working group will take on a life of its own, separate from (but closely related to) FOWB. On this front, it has a strong management group, but it is looking for a treasurer. If you (or a friend) wish to consider this role, please contact Chris Davies on 0439 077 038.

Chris would also be pleased to hear from you if you are interested in attending future working bees to progress the plan.

Meanwhile, the walking trail-ers continue their walks each Friday. Contact Zara Lupton at zaralupton@hotmail.com should you wish to join the group and enjoy breathtaking views and scintillating conversation!

FOWB is excited by this step closer to realization of what we hope will become a popular and well-loved part of the local landscape, for locals and tourists alike.

WILLUNGA MAIN STREET PROJECT

This long running project has now advanced to the next stage, with the appointment by Council of design consultants, Wax Design, to prepare plans for the renewal of the town centre.

Council has also brought together a Willunga Design Reference Group, representing each of the town's principal stakeholder organizations. It bears a close resemblance to the community elected Reference Group, which has been convening since its election in January 2015, along with additional community members selected by Council. It appears that all who applied or were nominated to participate have been included.

The first meeting of the new Group was held on Monday 22nd February in the Hub at Willunga and first reports are encouraging. Wax Design has also impressed on first sighting.

The Main Street Design Reference Group has been advised that it has two main aims, being to:

- review the detailed tree removal/replacement program and the location of tree pits with respect to parking; and
- be community ambassadors, relating information about the project back to [our] networks on the outcomes of the process and status of the project.

Because those representing the community are mostly elected by the community, we consider it our remit to comment on all aspects of the project and to also take the community views back into the process. It is therefore extremely important that members provide comment on both the Pinterest site as well as the website either directly or through your stakeholder group. Both the website and the Pinterest site can be accessed through the website of the Willunga Residents and Friends Association.

Members will also know that Council is seeking responses from the community about what art works it might like in the Main Street. The Willunga Main Street Reference Group considers that the closing date of March 13 is too short and will be seeking a longer period for this consultation.

Controversial Removal of Church Trees

ONSLAUGHT AT OLD ALDINGA

Many members of the FOWB were shocked to see and/or learn of the removal of 62 mature trees from the South Rd frontage of the Aldinga Uniting Church and Cemetery. The removal was apparently undertaken by On the Run, with the approval of the Church (although to remove how many trees is unclear), in order to enable better visibility of its new development for north bound traffic. The Church has indicated that it is happy with the situation and that it wanted to enhance the property by planting something more suitable.

FOWB is appalled by what we consider to be tantamount to an act of vandalism, for whatever excuses. It was unnecessary to strip the Church frontage bare and it was especially unnecessary to expose the cemetery to South Rd. The scorched earth approach also works against all of the great work that has been done by local traders to restore this beautiful heritage area and revive it into what has become a thriving place for friends and family to meet and socialise – until recently so appropriately complemented by such a mature stand of trees.

Council has advised that none of the trees were either regulated or significant and that there is nothing unlawful about what has been done. It is hoped that the Uniting Church and OTR will be collaborating to replant the area, although we are not aware of exactly what is planned. The Church has indicated that it might plant a hedge.

Members wishing to express their disappointment can do so by emailing the Chairperson of the Church, Jim Lee, at lajplee@gmail.com



Meanwhile, FOWB will continue to push for changes to planning laws that enable such large scale defoliation to occur.

BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

The McLaren Vale Biodiversity Project was to have kicked off on 6 March with a workshop on how to kill woody weeds – olive, ash, dog rose, etc – followed by a practice session under the watchful eye of the contractors who are giving up their time to show us the way.

Unfortunately it was stinking hot and NRM field operating protocols meant that we couldn't proceed. Instead, we'll be in the field on April 3rd.

The project is a joint initiative of FOWB, McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism, via the Sustainable Winegrowing Programme, the NRM and Council, and we thank them all for their support as we get established.

We aim to start pushing back against the spread of olives and to clean up a few creek lines in the process – and to build on projects that have gone before. It's going to be a project that runs for a while, and you are invited to be a part of it. We'll be in the field, somewhere, for two hours on the first Sunday of every month.



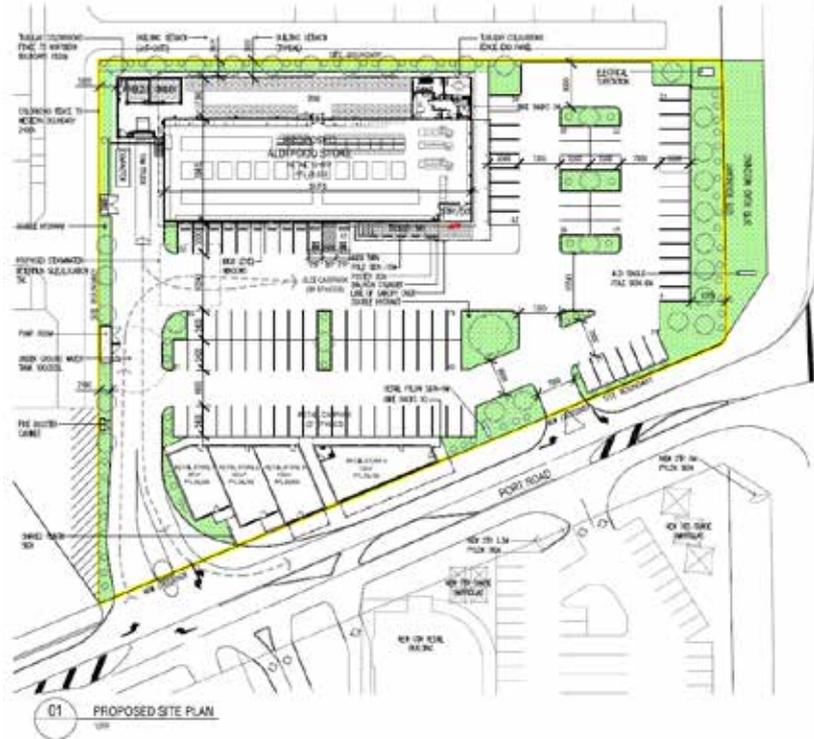
Above: artist's impression of proposed Aldi supermarket at Aldinga

Aldi Supermarket given go-ahead

Another big change that will affect the character of this small historic township is the recent approval given for the construction of an Aldi Supermarket at the corner of Port Rd and South Rd, opposite the new OTR. This non-complying development attracted strong opposition from Friends of Port Willunga, supported by FOWB.

Although the non-complying 'trigger' was 900sqm, approval has been granted for a 1,500 sqm store. Our concerns are about the scale of the development, which will be far and away the largest building in the town, and the traffic impacts, which are likely to be very significant, particularly coming on top of the OTR development.

FOWB does not oppose Aldi coming to Aldinga. We simply hold the view that this development would have been more appropriately sited at Aldinga Central, where there are paddocks of vacant land available for just such a use. Unfortunately, it appears that the owner of the suitably zoned land at Aldinga Central, apparently associated with local commercial interests, has declined to allow this to happen. If this is the case, then it would appear that it won the battle, but lost the war.

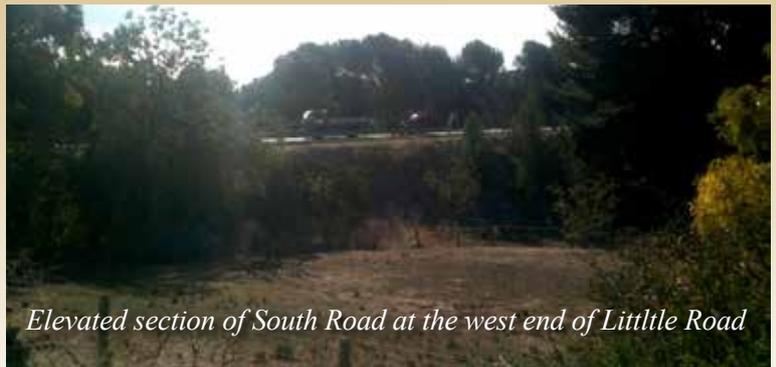


PROPOSED MAJOR ROADWORKS

The State Government's Department of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure recently called for comment on the proposed upgrade of South Road, from Malpas Road to Port Road and beyond. The proposed changes include a roundabout at the entrance to Old Aldinga; wire barriers in the centre of the road from Malpas Road to Port Road; a changed speed limit south of Little Road; reduced access to and from Little Road (no right hand turns); and no exit to South Road from the southern end of Old Coach Road.

FOWB has made a comprehensive submission arguing for changes to what is presently planned. While we accept the need for improvements, we think that the proposed solution has a number of shortcomings. In particular, we have urged that a less engineered solution be adopted in the vicinity of Old Aldinga, including that the section of South Road to the south of Little Road be re-designed in a more location appropriate manner.

More particularly, we have expressed our views on the need for better east-west connections between Willunga and Old Aldinga/Pt Willunga, especially for cyclists and pedestrians. As we see it, the current plan makes no safe provision for such a connection, with a bike crossing point incorporated into the planned roundabout at the corner of Port Road. We think that this will expose cyclists to unacceptable risks in trying to cross South Road.



Elevated section of South Road at the west end of Little Road

We prefer a solution which allows cyclists to pass underneath South Road in the vicinity of Little Road, which then allows access to Old Aldinga via Old South Road, and on to Pt Willunga via the Willunga Creek trail. While this might sound radical, it needs to be considered as a part of the region's cycling and tourism infrastructure – linking the Shiraz Trail to Pt Willunga – and we suggest that is a quite achievable outcome.

Stay tuned for further news. If you'd like to view our submission to DPTI, it is available on our website.





After long deliberation, and in what is believed to be an Australian first, the Environment Protection Authority has issued a licence for the previously unlicensed Aldinga Airfield, which has been declared to be a commercial operation. The airfield is SA's third busiest, after Adelaide and Parafield, with over 40,000 aircraft movements each year – mainly on account of the flying school which operates from the site. The threshold for issuing a licence is 20,000 movements annually.

Aldinga Aviation then challenged the EPA's right to issue a licence and its obligation to comply with said licence, but its case was recently rejected by the Environment, Resources & Development Court. The licence therefore stands.

While it will not have a material effect on the day to day operation of the airfield - although it does ban flights between 10.00pm and 6.00am and impose certain other conditions - it is an important step in recognizing that it is a significant local activity with potentially adverse effects on local residents. It is also an improvement on the existing governance arrangements, which are tied to a largely ineffective Land Management Agreement between the airfield and Council.

We are also pleased to report that references to the airfield have been deleted from Council's Transport & Movement Strategy, meaning that its primary future use will remain in recreation and training, rather than in moving towards the transport of either freight or passengers. This is another good outcome, for which we have been lobbying.



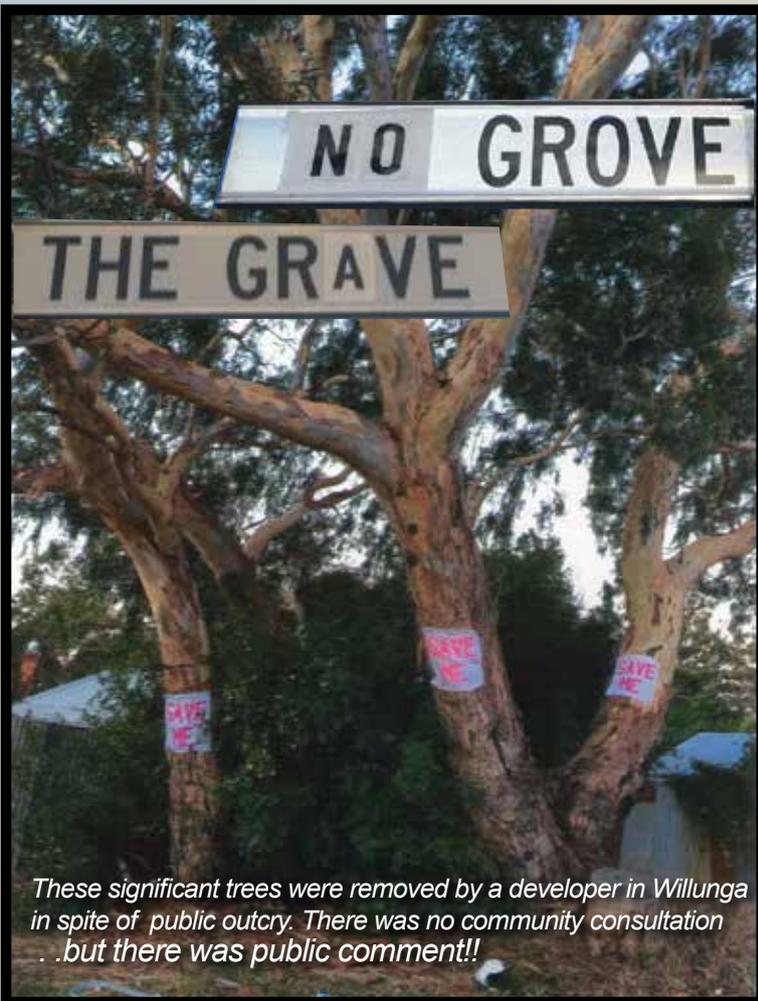
CULLEY ROAD FUNCTION CENTRE

An application has been lodged for a new function centre in the heritage listed barn at the southern end of Culley Rd. FOWB has made a representation against the application in its current form.

We are acting at the request of and in support of the neighbours, who we believe are rightly concerned at the effects on local amenity and safety.

FOWB does not oppose the use per se – and recognizes that the adaptive re-use of heritage items is often the key to their survival – but we think that there need to be limits on the nature and number of events that are allowed in an otherwise relatively secluded location.

Residents around the site of the proposed new function centre are concerned at noise and parking associated with this venture, along with an increased fire risk. The matter will be decided by Council's Development Assessment Panel.



These significant trees were removed by a developer in Willunga in spite of public outcry. There was no community consultation . . .but there was public comment!!

SIGNIFICANT TREES

The subject of significant trees remains on our agenda, but movement is slow.

Following the catastrophe at the former Southern Transport terminal on Aldinga Rd, a new community Group formed around the issue – being Residents & Friends of Willunga and it has been very active working to better protect our trees.

The present situation is that a coalition of Willunga community groups has formed, including FOWB, R&FoW, the National Trust, the Rec Park, Landcare and others.

Our first actions have been to develop a framework for thinking about and taking action on the problem – which, in one line, covers having knowledge of the situation (a register of trees); a clear set of rules (the Development Plan); education of those involved (planners, developers, contractors); and monitoring to ensure no surprises.

Most recently the coalition met with Mayor Rosenberg and most of our ward councillors. Unfortunately, what we heard gave little comfort that there might be any changes to the rules around significant trees any time soon. It was agreed that incorporating pro-tree mechanisms into the relevant Development Plans may be possible via provisions such as including a requirement for the retention of large eucalypts in the Principles of Development Control; a larger minimum allotment size where there is a significant tree and making the removal of significant trees a 'Category 2' matter, so that there is community notification ahead of time – unlike the Aldinga Rd debacle.

As the Mayor pointed out to the meeting though, the Development Plan ultimately has to be signed off by the Minister and he's apparently 'not for turning' on this issue. The Mayor also suggested that we need to have the Significant Trees legislation modified and the Planning Reforms re-directed towards community, among other things, and that we should start lobbying all sides of parliament now in the run up to the next State election.

In short, it's nothing to do with Council and good luck dealing with State government.

The coalition will re-group shortly to consider 'what now?'

Meanwhile, we're still cross, Mike.

PLANNING REFORM

FOWB has been making its views on the current Planning Reform process known to the Government, both directly and via our local members.

Our concerns centre on the risk that local 'voice' will be lost from the planning process under cover of 'streamlining' via, firstly, the dumbing down of Development Plans that will inevitably follow if the number of zones is reduced to the degree apparently proposed and, secondly, changes to the 'categorization' of individual developments such that the very opportunity to make representations is curtailed.

In a similar vein, we do not support the complete removal of Councillors from Development Assessment Panels. The planning process cannot be allowed to become completely bloodless.

We also think that the Minister is dreaming if he thinks that the community will engage closely with the writing of future Development Plans and, in return for the increased opportunity to do so, won't object to new development applications as and when they are lodged.

FOWB does not oppose development. We oppose bad development. For example, our role in the recent On the Run application didn't stop (or try to stop) the redevelopment, but it did ensure that what was built was smaller, better sited and more respectful of Old Aldinga than was the original plan.

Essentially, we want the community's ability to intervene in bad planning preserved in a way that provides a reasonable balance between the interests of both sides of the debate. Just as the community cannot oppose everything, developers do not have a monopoly on design smarts or planning wisdom and should neither expect nor be entitled to a tick in the box just for turning up.

Significant Trees

As seen from the above, the residents of the Willunga Basin are already outraged at some of the poor planning and environmental degradation that has occurred in the Basin. The new proposed regulations will almost certainly lead to bringing community outrage to boiling point and may even threaten the current government's tenure in office.

Membership Application

You are invited to joins us.

Our annual membership fee for individuals is only \$10.00 (\$15.00 for families).

*Please post to: P.O. Box 710,
Willunga 5172*

I hereby join as a FRIEND OF WILLUNGA BASIN and declare my support for retaining the natural and rural character of the Willunga Basin as stated in the objectives.

Title Name: (First Name).....

*..
(Surname):*

Address:

.....p.code

email (optional)

.....

*..
Payment enc. \$.....*

FOWB gives its assurance that your email will not be disclosed to anyone.

Tick if you wish us to post you a receipt.

Please let us know of any particular interests or concerns that you may have.

Please print, cut out, complete and post to join, or visit fowb.net

Be the first to know that is happening around the Basin! We are a group that cannot be ignored by either local or State governments. We meet at 7.30 on the second Wednesday of every month at the Environment Centre in High St, Willunga. Membership is a piffling \$10 for individuals and \$15 for families. A bargain at twice the price! Membership forms are available on our website at FOWB.net, and by printing and cutting out the form above.

You can support our work by simply being a member and thereby strengthening our 'voice' when we talk to the powers that be. Indeed, given recent events there is no better time than now to join Friends of Willunga Basin as your principal advocate for the built and natural environment in which we live.