



Friends of Willunga Basin inc.

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Newsletter Autumn 2015

Another busy year has just passed during which the work of the Friends' Committee scored some terrific wins but with the need to maintain our pro-active initiatives

STOP PRESS Discover Willunga is on again this year on 4 May, 11:00 to 4:00 in the Willunga Hall

There has been no better time to come and support the presence of the Friends at this event and bring along anyone you know who was recently involved in the huge community protest against the destruction of several significant and regulated trees at the old Southern Transport site on Aldinga Road.

This event demonstrated the need for the on-going voice of the community in the protection of all that we love about the place in which we live.

There was one Councillor who voiced the opinion that such 'activism' was 'inappropriate'!!!!

Friends of Willunga Basin will be active in lobbying for changes to the law that enabled this atrocity to occur.

Join Friends of Willunga Basin and ensure your voice counts.



Aldinga Road Trees

FoWB has been active in attempting to prevent a green light being given to the mass removal of Significant & Regulated Trees at the old Southern Transport Terminal. The removal of the largest of the trees has caused widespread community outrage, which we would urge the Council to notice, particularly in respect of the threat to the trees along the High Street in Willunga.

The way in which this matter has unfolded points to some fundamental problems in the application of the Significant Tree legislation in the City of Onkaparinga.

As evidenced by this case, the owner of a Significant Tree need only apply for approval to cut it down and Council may well grant it – without telling anyone or, if they do find out about it, not allowing anyone to make a representation. As mentioned above, FOWB will be lobbying for significant change in order to protect the magnificent trees of our community.

Willunga High Street Plan

Council's latest plan for High Street was recently exhibited for public comment.

A well-attended meeting of members was held on Wednesday 14th January with a view to ascertaining some common views. Jerry Keyte (only just out of hospital post an encounter with a road and a bike), presented a slide show of images representative of FOWB's take on how the project should be shaped.

FOWB subsequently submitted a high level listing of matters for Council to continue to consider:

- recognition of the historical location of the town within a rural setting and that the historic fabric of the town (buildings, slated gutterings, soft edging) are of high value to the state, the Council area and to the community as a tourist destination and as a place to live and work;
- removal of items that clash with the historical value of the town such as pool fencing and Council banners, and assurance that there are no inappropriate new installations;
- that an earthed toned tarmac, similar to that used at/around the Star of Greece Café at Port Willunga, be used in preference to black;
- retention of native trees, which the meeting saw as essential, and of 'soft' edges and landscaping that takes pedestrians away from kerbsides and into landscaped areas;
- in recognition for our social responsibility towards the environment, to have high level usage of indigenous species (preferable provenience species). It was felt that there should be close collaboration with the NRM board with regard to the removal of trees and all new plantings;
- special consideration of the huge increase of traffic/pedestrians on market days and lower level usage at other times;
- minimal loss of parking spaces, including minimal use of 'parklets', and careful placement of trees; and

STOP PRESS: Was it our communal anxiety about what might occur in the High Street of Willunga that brought out such a large number of participants to the concluding community consultation held by Council representatives in the Willunga Football Club on Wednesday 18th March?



use of artists and artisans within the local area to contribute to the overall result – FOWB's view being that the use of local artisans contributes to the strengthening and well-being of the community.

In summary, the meeting acknowledged progress in the conceptual design, including the expanded coverage of the project, but felt unable to provide carte blanche support to the plan as it was exhibited. It unanimously supported the concept of an 'Implementation Reference Group', including FOWB, to work with the Council on matters of detail such as:

- involvement in decisions regarding the removal of existing trees and on the identification of the location and selection of new plantings, in collaboration with the Willunga office of the NRM Board;
- nominations, suggestions and selection of artists and artisans;
- selection and placement of street furniture, fencing, signage and the like;
- working with artists, artisans and store-holders, as well as the National Trust (Willunga Branch) to identify locations and prepare designs for inclusion in the paving Nominations for involvement in the Reference Group were indicated by Wendi Avery, Kathy Beitz, Don Chapman, Stephanie Walker, Jerry Keyte and Anthony Whaite.



Join Friends of Willunga Basin to make sure your voice is heard and that we actually end up with something we are all happy about and not something we have to endure!



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Willunga Loop Walking Trail

The Willunga Basin Trail is a 100km hiking loop around the whole of Willunga Basin. You can walk on it now. There's a map on our web site.

This year we are engaged with Council regarding inclusion of the trail in its new Trails Strategy, which is pending. We are also searching for ways to fill in a couple of "missing links" to complete the loop, and monitoring the sale of unused public roads in areas traversed by the trail, because they are a part of it.

Friends of Willunga Basin also registered a site for the annual Clean Up Australia Day event along Edwards Road, a quiet, unmade road section that forms part of the trail. About half a tonne of old fencing wire was collected and removed. Thanks to all those who came along! We will take part in Clean Up Australia Day again, any suggestions for a site to attack are welcome

Top: FOWB members walking part of the trail
Left: FOWB's Clean Up Australia Day effort
Below Left: The site at the end of the day
Bottom: Just some of the debris removed



Biodiversity Plan for the Willunga Basin

Although unable to attract federal funding, this project will proceed as a collaboration between the Friends (watch out for notice of pop-up activities) and McLaren Vale Grape Wine Tourism Association, in concert with the NRM Board and Council. A steering committee has been formed and planning is underway.

Other Matters engaging the Friends during 2015 include:

- concerns about the proposal for the re-enactment of motorcycle racing along Sellicks Beach in 2016, seen by the proponents as a huge public event with large crowds.
- Willunga High Street Development (expected to commence in 2015 and conclude in 2016);
- Old Aldinga Township development – have you seen the terrific undertakings of some of the small businesses there?
- continuing to work on our various initiatives, including the hiking trail and the biodiversity project; and
- continuing to ensure that building and development proposals coming before Council do accord with the McLaren Vale Character Preservation Act.

Funding Cuts to Environmental Watchdogs

The Friends authorised small donations to both the Environmental Defenders' Office and the Conservation Council because of funding cuts by the Federal government. The Friends will continue lobbying against cuts to the growth of renewable energy options.

Chicks on the beach

Emma Stephens, Coast, Estuary and Marine Officer, Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board

Hooded Plovers are smallbirds found on Australia's southern ocean beaches, including the Fleurieu Peninsula. They spend their entire lives on the beach, and they also lay their nests on the beach, between the high-tide mark and the base of the foredune.

Sometimes they will nest on the dune itself, but usually on the beach above the high-tide mark.

The nest is a very simple scrape in the sand, with one to three very-camouflaged eggs which they lay from August through to March – spring and summer – the busiest time on our beaches, so the threats they face during the breeding season are huge.

And it's for this reason that Hooded Plovers have one of the lowest rates of chick survival in the world.

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board and BirdLife Australia coordinate the Hooded Plover program on the Fleurieu Peninsula, and work closely with councils and volunteers. A group of volunteers "The Friends of the Hooded Plover – Fleurieu Peninsula" monitor the breeding success of these birds.

Hooded Plover fast facts:

Hooded Plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*)

- Vulnerable in SA where there are around 600 birds
- Fewer than 50 Hooded Plovers are found on the Fleurieu Peninsula
- There are approximately 22 breeding pairs on the Fleurieu Peninsula
- Length: 19-23cm
- Height: 10cm (smaller than a seagull)
- Wingspan: 36-44cm
- Weight: 90-100g
- Hoodies lay 1-3 camouflaged eggs on the beach and incubate for about 28 days
- Once hatched, chicks have to feed themselves from day 1
- Chicks have to grow from the size of a 20c coin to the size of an adult in 5 weeks!
- They cannot fly until 5 weeks of age.



Above: Adult and chick at Ochre Cove (Sue & Ashley Read)
Right: Two adults and chicks at Ochre Cove (Sue & Ashley Read)

How you can help Hooded Plovers

During spring and summer, when walking beaches, please stick close to the water's edge and leash your dog.

If you unknowingly sit near a nest or chicks, you will inadvertently cause the Hooded Plover to come off its nest, or send its chick into hiding. This means the eggs and chicks will be left vulnerable to the elements and predators, and chicks will go hungry.

When a nest is found, temporary fencing and signage are installed to help protect the nest and subsequent chicks. Please look out for this signage and fencing and avoid these areas by walking at the water's edge and leashing your dog near these fenced/signed areas. Permanent signage is also being installed at beaches where Hooded Plovers breed.

Breeding success over the last few seasons:

Breeding has occurred at Port Willunga and Maslin Beach since 2009, and a total of 9 chicks have fledged during this period at these beaches. The 2014/15 season is still continuing, but so far we have had only 7 chicks fledge, one of which was at Ochre Cove.

Contact:

For more information, to report a sighting, or become a volunteer please contact Emma Stephens, Coast, Estuary and Marine Officer for the Natural Resources, Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges region: 8229 9826 or estephens@holdfast.sa.gov.au or visit www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtlofty

For more information check out the link for Bird Life Australia: <http://birdlife.org.au/projects/beach-nesting-birds>

Membership Renewal

FOWB annual membership remains very very affordable at

- \$8 for an individual
- \$6 concession
- \$10 for a family

and falls due for renewal each year at the AGM in September. As the cost of membership is so low, we hope that members who join will be happy to renew at the AGM even if their initial 'year' of membership was less than a full calendar year.

Aldinga Washpool

FOWB takes an ongoing interest in The Washpool, which is one of the region's environmental treasures.

Current discussion revolves around the fragmented ownership, how this effects the management of The Washpool and how the situation can be improved.



Aldinga Airfield and Associated Activities

The Friends have been advised that the EPA has now issued a licence for the Aldinga Airfield. It provides minor restriction on training circuits to eliminate activity on public holidays, the logging of all flights with effect from 15th January, restriction of hours of operation from 7:00am to 9:00pm, and that no on-site buildings may be altered without EPA approval. It is understood that Aldinga Aviation is appealing the decisions.

A letter has been sent to the EPA expressing that FOWB is pleased that a licence has been issued, but disappointed that there is no restriction on the hours of operation on Sundays. We have urged the EPA to fight the appeal and are also encouraging Council to do the same.



'On-The-Run' Service Station Development at Aldinga

As many of you will have seen in the local press, approval powers for this proposal were taken away from Council into the jurisdiction of the State. This was a disappointing decision and one we will be querying, as our assessment of the project is that it is certainly not a matter of State significance, as it is required for there to be a referral to the DAC. And why do service stations have to be so ugly? The fact is they don't, and can accommodate the environment in which they are located.

Notwithstanding, Friends have had direct discussion with the proponents (Peregrine), and appreciate the revisions made. We commend Peregrine Corp for its willingness to engage with us.

The outcome is a triumph of co-operative planning and shows how the planning system can work, given half a chance.

Membership Application

You are invited to joins us.

Our annual membership fee for individuals is only \$8.00 (\$6.00 concession).

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

