



**Draft Minutes of AGM, Friends of Lorne,
9 October 2021, 4pm by Zoom**

1. Present: Jane Orr, Lindy Pearce, Cynthia Wynhoven, Jack Wynhoven, Graham Brawn, David Cummings, John Wilson, Wendy Wilson, David Worth, Eva Youl, Bill Youl, Rhyll Nance, Allan Nance, Mary Lush, Ian Stewart, Gary Allen, Sue Godwin, Steve Bayley, Andrew Robertson, Judy Ross, Suzanne Diviny, St John Sutton, Felicity Harkness, Peter Harkness, Alison Harcourt, Karen Pitt, Andrea Cone, Colin Leitch, Penny Hawe

Apologies: George Swinburne, John Wilson, Valerie Wilson

2. Acceptance of the minutes of AGM November 14th, 2020
Proposed: Rhyll Nance. Seconded: Mary Lush. Carried.
3. TREASURER'S REPORT. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT (Lindy Pearce)
Proposed: Lindy Pearce. Seconded: Steve Bayley. Carried.
4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Penny Hawe)

"First, I'd like to thank the members of the committee Mary Lush, Lindy Pearce, Steve Bayley, St John Sutton, Jane Orr, and Sue Godwin (who has just taken a three-month leave). Once again, our job this year has been huge, and we've been successful primarily because of them.

Just to remind you this is our focus. Planning and development in Lorne and its environs:

1. consistent with the need for preservation of the natural features, flora and fauna of the district
2. consistent with the balanced needs of permanent residents, holidaying residents, campers and tourists

At our last AGM in November 2020, I said that we were bringing in a revitalisation strategy. We wanted to get our systems of operation in order and make them as efficient as we can. I said we wanted to increase the profile of Friends of Lorne. Last time I spoke to you I said that the profile of Friends of Lorne was pretty low. In fact, if you typed into a Google search you would most likely find a pleasant group of retired girl guides who hold picnics and events at Lorne Castle in Northern Ireland. Now our local Friends of Lorne has more profile. And in fact, now our main job is to distinguish ourselves locally from Friends of Pt Grey, Friends of Queens Park, Friends of lots of places, really. So that's a good thing. Our profile has probably come about through our work in planning and environment issues. But we still have a bit of a way to go to be understood and recognised for who we are and what we do.

Main activities in the last 12 months.

We have upgraded our recording systems and we have been delighted to renew some sleeping members and work out a more systematic way of reminding people that their membership is due.

The committee has been active with seven general meetings and one special meeting just on planning strategy

You probably know us best through [the newsletters](#). For example, in our May newsletter we told you about the platypus monitoring site that Mary Lush has registered with the with the Australian Platypus Monitoring Network, and there is now an article about this in this month's *Lorne Independent*. In that newsletter we also advertised and recruited interest in our Surf Coast Whales webinar that we held in June. What was particularly rewarding about this was that some of the kids from the school took part and asked questions. Both the platypus project and the whale project invite people to be citizen scientists to observe and help conserve habitat and native species. What's also good about these activities is that they have extended out into the Lorne community and engaged some new members. The video for the whales webinar is on our website, next to the ones we did on bushfires last year.

We have put together two [planning and environment submissions](#). You can find these on our website also. The first was a submission we made to *the Independent Review of the Victorian Wildlife Act* (where we put an emphasis on habitat maintenance and education through opportunities for encounters with wildlife). The second one was on the *Surf Coast Shire's economic development strategy*. Here we wanted to see more evidence-based planning and wider understanding of the range of resources on the Surf Coast (it's not just about business and business growth) – it's also about human resources, social resources, and environmental resources.

We had [meetings](#) with the new chair of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority. This is the group that took over from what used to be called the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee. The new chair is Libby Mears, a former mayor of the Surf Coast and long-time Surf Coast resident. We worked with Richard Riordan on the Pt Grey development and Lorne foreshore management, and we've met and worked with the local councillor Gary Allen.

The [Great Ocean Road Communities Network \(GORCN\)](#) is an association of all the groups up and down the coast like ourselves - so we've got member organisations from Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Torquay Geelong, Wye River, Separation Creek and so on. It formed to try to coordinate and strengthen community voice, given that the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority had been formed.

One of the first things we are doing as part of GORCN is a [four-part webinar series on erosion](#) on the Great Ocean Road. You likely saw on the news a couple of days ago that the beach below Point Addis has now been permanently closed because the cliffs have fallen onto the beach. Down at Wye River the Surf Club is being reclaimed by the sea. Mary Lush used the expression in our September newsletter alongside some photos: "another year, another metre". I urge you to go onto our website to find out more about the upcoming webinars. They are going to be anchored by some big names like Gael Jennings and also Robin Williams from the Science Show, so we expect a lot of media attention.

And, we have been spending a lot of time trying to impact the planning permit that was issued in July last year to erect the Beacon Building on [Pt Grey](#). You'll see here (picture) that the vision of the former Great Ocean Road Coast Committee was that Pt Grey would become such an idyllic car and boat free spot that kangaroos would cross the road, and munch on the grass. Community opinion was against this, with the idea being that we needed to maintain a workable maritime precinct (for fishing and boating) and that we needed to preserve Lorne's history as a fishing port, with the best way of doing that being to retain and re-purpose the fisherman's co-op building.

The late Lawrie Baker made saving the co-op his driving mission, launching the VCAT Appeal. Other champions jumped in. Stephen Hains and his son made this video (picture) which we emailed to all of you earlier in the year. Ian Lovell and Judi Kennelly launched a campaign to cover Lawrie's legal costs. Jane Orr set up the Pt Grey pages on our website to make sure people fully understood the history of how the proposed development came about, exactly what the plans were, and what people could do to make a difference. The Lorne Historical Society and Friends of Lorne teamed up to put in an application to Heritage Victoria to save the building and retain the history of the fishing industry. The Lorne Aquatic and Angling Club, and Stephen Hains as a private citizen, joined Lawrie in the VCAT appeal. I think Gary Allen may fill you in on the rest. The outcome of the appeal to VCAT is not yet decided. But meanwhile

commitments to set aside past decisions and work with the community (to retain and reimagine the co-op building for a new century) have been made by GORCAPA.

Overall comments and challenges

We can only achieve our ends if we have skills and energy. We've had a couple of comings and goings on the committee in the last two years which is good for skill mix and we will likely try to recruit extra people during the year. But you don't just have to volunteer to be on the committee- we have some (attractive!) time-limited tasks and little project and working groups on different issues.

For example, *Lorne by Numbers* is a whole-of-community citizen science project to be precise about the levels of visitation, length of stay and size/makeup of permanent population needed to retain key assets in Lorne (e.g., SES volunteers, health care, sporting opportunities for youth, etc). It's a terrific little project and it would be further along if I had not dropped the ball for a few months when I was doing too many other things. I'm *not* saying that I am busier than any other person. I'm saying it's a skill to be able to manage your time and to own up quickly when you're stuck. I learned that the hard way. Thankfully everyone else did their homework tasks successfully and I've just about caught up.

Information and misinformation. This is a big theme globally, and it is playing out in Lorne when you see people get the wrong end of the stick and combine that with outrage. So, for Pt Grey, for example, the developers are the state government, but you see people who think those proposing to demolish the co-op are the SCS. You see people who have got confused about what Council has been voting on recently (consent for use and transfer of a road), as opposed to what they voted on last July (development of the site). It's really hard and so I think *we all have a role in getting the right information out there*. We also have to appreciate that some people will always join the conversation late, so the onus is on us to make catch-up easy. We need short 'explainers' so that late joiners are not disadvantaged. For our own organisation, especially, we want it made easy for the part-time residents to participate and not feel excluded from the conversation, because they don't feel they know as much of the background as those who live here. Our webpages strive to do this, but we likely need more avenues a well.

All of this work relies on relationship building – you all know that. But it's been harder in the last year with not being able to meet in person. A heart-to-heart Zoom conference is just not the same.

Teamwork really helps. For example, we've got a working group on planning led by Graham Brawn and StJohn Sutton and a few months back they asked us to read a hefty volume of planning scheme and strategy documents. To be honest, it was a bit daunting, and we only did it because we all had to do it. But when we did, we were surprised. Planning bungles that we could see in Lorne weren't because of something inherently wrong with the Lorne Strategy or the Neighbour Character Overlay, it was because planning schemes weren't being followed or implemented. So that gave us the idea to promote more knowledge about the planning schemes. You might remember last year I showed you a photograph of Lorne's first four-storey private home which broke every rule in the book. So now we've got the idea of doing "CSI crime scene investigations" of how policy gets implemented wrongly, perhaps starting with this four-storey new home, or the paling fence that's gone up on four sides of a property in Hall Street, when Lorne is meant to have "no fence policy" to encourage the movement of wildlife across the town. So, these investigations will be fun. They will be instructive, and *most importantly, they will help us communicate the issues better than if everyone had to sit down and read 20 pages of planning scheme documents* – because people in Lorne aren't literate about planning, architects are keeping quiet, and Council Officers are not seeing the need to push back against what should be easily recognised as inappropriate requests.

Finally, when I put together my report, I was rather hoping that perseverance would be a quality or value of girl guides. But it's not. That's why they're off having picnics. So, I thought I'd just remind you about the perseverance of people in the past who have done their best to keep what is precious about

Lorne. Fifty years ago, one of our forerunner organisations was successful in getting the land up the back declared the Lorne Forest Park. They stopped the Swing Bridge being demolished. They stopped high rise flats being built on Grove Road. They were responsible for overlays protecting the tree canopy. They had many losses, but they also had significant wins. We need to grow this civic and social conscience of Lorne for the next generation. I want to thank all of you who are working hard and doing that. Thank you.”

President’s report was accepted. Moved: Mary Lush. Seconded: Gary Allen

5. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE. The following people were nominated and appointed for the incoming year. There was no need for an election. Mary Lush (Secretary), Lindy Pearce (Treasurer), Penny Hawe (President), StJohn Sutton, Jane Orr, Steve Bayley.

6. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEES.

Two motions were proposed:

That the annual subscription fees should remain unchanged, at \$25 for family membership and \$15 for a single. Moved: Mary Lush. Seconded: Penny Hawe. Carried.

That new members joining after January 1 in any one year should only pay half the full subscription fee. Moved: Mary Lush. Seconded: Penny Hawe. Carried.

The formal business of the meeting closed at 4.35pm. The meeting was followed by a presentation by Councillor Gary Allen and discussion.