



**Annual General Meeting 2024
Saturday 30 November, 4 pm,
Qdos Gallery, Allenvale Rd, Lorne**

MINUTES

Penny Hawe (President) welcomed the members to the AGM and acknowledged that we were holding the meeting on the traditional lands of the Gadabanud people. She also thanked members Graeme Wilkie and Gillian Oliver for allowing us to host our meeting at Qdos. A special welcome was extended to the new members.

1. Present: Graham Blashki, Helen Clements, John Clements, Evelyn Firstenberg, Graham Brawn, Kevin Diviny, Suzanne Diviny, Jo Dunin, Tony Dunin, Linton Ferguson, Mandy Ferguson, Ros Grady, Wendy Hutchison, Peter Bardsley, Rhyll Nance, Karen Pitt, Amanda Place, Jane Orr, John Wilson, Wendy Wilson, Alan Shiell, Eva Youl, Bill Youl, Lindy Pearce, Mary Rose Yuncken, Penny Hawe (Chair)

2. Apologies (* proxy form completed and proxy given to the President) Trish Brawn, Heather Rice, Lorna Pitt, Ron Billard, Matthew Boland, Deb Burns,* Jay Owers,* Elaine Cleary,* Colin Leitch,* Liz Quinn,* Jim Quinn,* Mary Sheehan, John Wilson, Valerie Wilson, StJohn Sutton, David Harper, Mary Lush, Ian Farran, Robyn Farran, Louise Buchanan, Gary Allen.

3. Minutes of the AGM of 18 November 2023. Two errors were noted. Both Jane Orr and Karen Pitt were present at the meeting but had been left off the attendance record. After amending this oversight, it was moved that the Minutes be accepted. Moved: Rhyll Nance. Seconded: Eva Youl. Carried

4. Approval of financial statement for 2023/2024 and Treasurer's report. Lindy Pearce presented the financial statement and Treasurer's report. It was noted that there has been an increase in donations to other organisations, as explained in last paragraph of the report. Our donation to Lorne Community Connect (they house our filing cabinet with our archives) has remained at \$100. A new donation was made to the Christos Poetry Prize. We also made a one off donation to Birdlife Australia at the request of the photographer whose image we reproduced on postcards made for the membership drive. We also purchased witches' hats for use on the beach during hooded plover protection. It was moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Moved: Tony Dunin. Seconded: Karen Pitt

5. President's report Penny Hawe explained that her report had been posted on the website and members had been notified. It was long and would take 45 minutes to read verbatim. She therefore gave a verbal summary of the report and stated that she would take questions on all topics in her full report, or any other matters concerning members. The summary report appears below.

“My formal report is arranged according to topics. Today, I propose to present the summary this way: overall impression of the year, what’s been hard, what’s been really hard, the frustration, the surprises, and the highlights.

OVERALL The main standout is that we have done a lot. We have met eight times this year. We have been representing FoL at other forums and networks around the Surf Coast. We have been putting in submissions. Writing to Council. Upgrading the website and more. We have doubled the membership in the last four years. And when I get to the end, I will repeat that we owe this activity not simply to the Committee, but to the generosity of members who have put their hand up to do a range of things, from walking the streets in Lorne to distribute our membership invitation postcards to every letterbox in town, to representing us at the Barwon Water Community Reference Group.

WHAT’S BEEN HARD? Two things, the affordable housing work and the planning policy review work. FoL has a position which is that we prefer, as first preference, to see affordable housing solutions for key and essential workers that use existing housing stock. Just because these will have the least environmental impact. Saving the greenspace and tree canopy is a FoL signature value. But it does not mean we are against new development, if appropriate. It is just not our first choice.

Our main task this year has been to research options and encourage the formation of some kind of community-based oversight group to compare and choose among options. It’s been hard because Committee for Lorne has taken some convincing. They did not convene the first meeting until September this year. But now that has happened, we want to see continued information sharing about options and collaboration among those with expertise. It’s hard because there’s about five or six different things that could be done and it takes work to review them. In the President’s report you will see that the Council is now also involved and keen to help.

The planning policy review refers to the Council’s Urban Futures Strategy. We wrote about it in Newsletter. Our submissions are on our website. It assumes that over the next 30 years we need to accommodate an expanded population all within the town boundaries (due to the fire regulations). Hence the need for us the preference to coax existing housing stock on to the long-term rental market and to investigate financing schemes that could make Lorne homes (or homes in the surrounding towns) more affordable to local workers/families.

WHAT’S BEEN REALLY HARD? The idea of FoL systematically assessing all planning applications. No one seems to have any problem with the logic. The logic being, because the Council takes the number of objections into account when making decisions, reluctance by unhappy neighbours to rock the boat is resulting in too many developments being approved that are contrary to the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO). So maybe that is a space FoL should step into. I wrote about it twice in the *Lorne Independent*. The second time was to correct some myths, misunderstanding and anxieties that I created by the first article.

However, I can now see that the real problem is that people take it personally. First of all, the idea is “triggering” for people with bad past experiences. They don’t wish to be reminded. Then there are those who might feel something like “Let he who hath no sin cast the first stone.” But given that the NCO only came in in 2008, many of us will be living in properties that would now be considered non-compliant but were OK at the time they were built.

But then there was another personal take that I was really surprised by, and that was people thinking “But I’m a local. I’m a good person”. In other words, “I don’t deserve to be objected to. Not like those holiday homeowners from out of town (ie, the ‘bad people’)”. Jeepers. I was not

aware of the extent to which planning applications are seen as ways to attack some people and excuse others, according to some unwritten rule book about who matters most in Lorne.

So, I need to reiterate that what we are talking about is *objective*. There is a set of criteria and a proposal either meets it or not. In the report I talk about three trial application reviews. Whether FoL becomes involved in systematically reviewing all planning applications needs to be discussed more fully with the membership and voted on. A more recent idea is that we simply offer a “help” service to those neighbours who do wish to object but feel inexperienced and would appreciate the help.

THE FRUSTRATION? Yes, it is Pt Grey. But only because GORCAPA has been obliged to press the reset button because of the updated advice on sea level rise. Sea level rise is not their fault. It requires a massive, unprecedented, coordinated, legally defensible response.

FoL has not joined the generalised grievance about GORCAPA that has characterised much of the recent dialogue in Lorne. But the controls put on GORCAPA by DEECA are frustrating. That includes the confidentiality agreement that prevents our community representatives disclosing the content of conversations. We have complained about that.

Right now, we don’t know how much of our past Pt Grey input has been heard and will be reflected in the new plans that the community will see in the new year. The most recent “opportunity and constraints” report lists potential activities under consideration at Pt Grey that would be ruled out by the Marine and Coastal Act as not being coastal dependent (eg farmer’s markets). So, in the absence of further context and information, that dents confidence a bit. On the other hand, we were assured that these were just examples, and not commitments. We understand that buildings may have to be set further back and be modest in size.

My report outlined that quite a few communities along the coast at the moment are frustrated by GORCAPA and that the Great Ocean Rd Communities Network (GORCN) is encouraging all of us to complete reports on our experiences, coordinated through GORCN. We will report on the range of project experiences (Pt Grey, the tea tree, the swimming pool etc) and they are all different. In terms of the hooded plover protection experience, my report explains that GORCAPA has been an outright champion. We would not have got Victoria’s first exclusion zone, that proved highly effective, without GORCAPA’s high-level leadership and quick action. So, hat’s off to them. They were terrific.

THE SUPRISES The hoodies took us by surprise. Many of us only vaguely knew such birds existed. But we turned into overnight experts. The chance to be on the beach and connect with the public, to revel in the extraordinary opportunity to prevent two extremely rare chicks from dying, was *wonderful*. A real tonic, and contrast to the cut and thrust of going to meetings and writing emails and submissions and all that. We recruited new volunteers. We recruited new members right off the beach. It put the environment front and centre. And who knew that we had “soft tradies” in town? Blokes I usually just see with chain saws, giant utes and hefty trailers came down on to the beach after work, regularly checking on how the chicks were going. Conversations on the beach were an absolute treat.

THE HIGHLIGHTS. There were two. The first was the opportunity we had to organise and pay for the highland bagpiper for the Doug and Mary Stirling Cup Award lunch. The award is made every two years. Doug Stirling is 102. Unfortunately, the night before he was due to be a guest at the lunch he was admitted to the Lorne hospital. So we asked the piper to go up to the hospital and play Mull of Kintyre (Doug’s request) up there. The piper played for about 20 minutes, doing a load of extra songs. The delighted staff (and a few patients) spilled out onto the footpath to listen. It was magnificent! Doug loved it. The piper then quickly hightailed it back up to Stribling Reserve to pipe in the recipients of the Award this year, Lesley and Clive Goldsworthy.

The second highlight appears in my report, under the topic of the membership drive. We did not get a ton of new members with our letterbox drive. I was disappointed by that. But one thing it clearly did was put FoL on the radar screen for the school. In the school play this year (written and produced by the students) the habitat of a rare creature (the “pilkip”) is threatened by greedy property developers, aided by corrupt councillors of the Surf n’ Turf Coast Council. It was a marvellous spoof of almost every organisation and group in the whole town. The heroes of the narrative are a group of bleeding heart, hoodie-loving retirees with imagined superpowers. They (ie, we) saved the day. So, I take this as a win for FoL.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS It is pretty clear that many people would rather stick needles in their eyes than be on something called a “committee.” But happily, StJohn Sutton, Lindy Peace and Mary Rose Yuncken served on the Committee this year and Mary Rose took on the additional task of representing FoL at the Pt Grey Community Reference Group. Thank you. That has been huge.

Deb Burns is our membership secretary. She has made the world of difference to how we work. Colin Leitch represents us at Barwon Water and you will have seen his updates in the Newsletters. Mike Anderson and Marilyn McKenzie walked the streets for our membership drive. Eva Youl does our *Nature Notes* for the Newsletter and is on the lookout for all things environmental. Jane Orr and Graham Brawn are on our planning application feasibility review group. Jo Dunin, Ian Farran and Ron Billard have also put up their hand to be involved in that group along with Mary Rose Yuncken and StJohn Sutton. .

Friends of Lorne hoodie volunteers are Deb Burns, Sheryl Lewis, Peter Lewis, Penny Hawe, Alan Shiell, Mary Lush, Eva Youl, Karen Pitt, Sophie Buchanan, Liz Quinn, Jo Dunin, Amanda Place, David McCormack, David Harper, Linton Ferguson, Mike Anderson, Helen Clements and John Clements. This season we have been joined by Ross Dimsey and Janine Haddow.

THANK YOU. I can’t really express how much your time and care is appreciated.”

In discussion about Pt Grey, Mary Rose Yuncken and Karen Pitt (who is also on the community reference group) reiterated that the GORCAPA staff have a massive amount of work to do to develop plans compliant with the new coastal adaptation requirements. Kevin Diviny (who is also President of the Lorne Historical Society) reiterated that having a place to tell Lorne’s history on the site remains important.

It was moved that the President’s report be accepted. Moved: Jo Dunin. Seconded: Kevin Diviny. Carried.

6. Election of Office Bearers and Committee

Eva Youl assumed the role of Chair and electoral officer, and PH stood down. The Chair noted that only one nomination had been received by the nomination date for each of the positions of President, Treasurer, and Secretary. That was Penny Hawe, Lindon Pearce, and Mary Rose Yuncken respectively. So, they were declared elected. For the five positions on the committee, four nominations were received by the nomination date: StJohn Sutton, Penny Hawe, Lindon Pearce and Mary Rose Yuncken. So, they were declared elected. The Chair called for nominations for the committee from the floor of the meeting for the vacant position. None were received. The committee will carry a vacancy into the coming year, which can be filled casually. Eva Youl then stepped down as Chair and PH resumed the role of Chair.

7. Consideration of Motions

a. Motion 1. That annual subscription fees remain unchanged, at \$25 for family membership and \$15 for a single. The motion was passed unanimously.

b. Motion 2: That new members joining after 1 January in any year pay only half the full subscription fee. The motion was passed unanimously.

c. Motion 3. That the total number of people coming on to the Committee for the coming year be five (including Treasurer, Secretary, President). That is that we have 2 “ordinary” members. The motion was passed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 5pm