

President: Dorothy Warwick
Treasurer: John McKenna
Secretary: Helen Olde



Minutes of Public Meeting Held on Sunday 14 August 2011 Venue: Linnwood, Byron Road, Guildford

Welcome & Apologies

John McKenna opened the meeting at 2.10pm, and welcomed everyone in attendance. Special welcome to Mayor of Holroyd Cllr Peter Monaghan, Deputy Mayor Cllr John Perry and Cllrs Pam Colman, Greg Cummings, Ross Grove and Vasee Rajadurai.

In Attendance at today's meeting, as per the Attendee Sheet:

Dorothy Warwick, Pat O'Brien, Sue Evans, Del Donohoe, Hazel Keepence, Olive Wicks, Michael Griggs, John Walz, Ronnie Galeb, Vanessa McNeill, Dorothy Thomas, Lawrie Thomas, June de Zoete, Eleanore Reichel, Jan Thomas, Stan Thomas, Margaret McKay Warn, Russ Werner, Beth Werner, John Perry, Pam Zopf, Peter Monaghan, Pam Colman, Diane Jogia, Peter Warwick, John & Pam Tompsett, John McKenna, Margaret McKenzie, Adriana de Haas, Vasee Rajadurai, Kaye Weaver, Coral Hamilton, Christine McKenna, Audrey Murphy, Ross Grove, Gerry O'Brien, Angela Caire.

Apologies:

Irie Olde, Helen Olde, Pamela Richardson, Mariya Gojan, Jill Finch, Clynt Sheedy, Stephen George, Margaret Grace, Alex Mackenzie, Vicki Thornton, Kerima-Gae Topp, Julie & Don Nixon, Jenny Moyse, Julie Walz, Judith Moller, John & Elizabeth Brodie, and Merv Ismay, General Manager, Holroyd City Council.

Confirmation of Minutes of Public Meeting held on Sunday 12 June 2011

Moved by Gerry O'Brien, seconded by Stan Thomas, that the minutes of the Public Meeting held on Sunday 13 June 2011 are a true and correct record of the meeting.

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the previous meeting's minutes.

Correspondence

John McKenna tabled the folder of correspondence and passed it around to the attendees for their information.

President's Report

Good afternoon and welcome to our August Public Meeting and 9th Annual General Meeting.

As in previous years, the Annual Report will be a normal report of what has been happening recently and a general round up of the past 12 months.

We usually start our meetings with any donations that have come in so will stay with tradition and show you:

- Some multiple volumes of Australia's Heritage Magazine donated by Helen Allison.
- A bed warmer donated by Pat O'Brien – which would be very handy on some of these cold nights!
- And from our good friend Kevin Woodward, we have received a silver coloured plate with a cutting board insert, together with an Olympus ACE-E Camera with original instruction book, purchased about 1963.
- Beth Werner donated a book on Australian pottery which mentions the McCredies – there's a paragraph on McCredie pottery and a small photo.

It's always difficult to know where to start with these reports so I will begin with:

Open Days - Over the past 12 months these have been very successful and well attended. We have certainly had a variety of exhibitions over the year, and I'm sure that's why people keep coming back, because we offer something different every time, and not only do we have return visitors, but the numbers of new people attending is increasing every time, so more and more people are becoming aware of what a wonderful place this is to visit. Our July day, once again was huge, with over 500 people through the house and more staying outside

to drool over the vintage American cars. The September Open House is looking like being another fairly big one with the WWII Jeeps coming – the organisers tell me that they have over 50 cars confirmed so far plus some interesting displays, so it sounds like it could be a bit different!

There are two events not listed on our Calendar of Events – one being the date of the 120th Birthday celebrations. The reason being that this will be a private function – only financial members of the Friends, ex-residents of any of the children's homes on the property who we have contact with, and official guests will be invited due to space and catering restrictions, so make sure you have renewed your membership if you would like an invitation. The other event was going to be a private concourse day for the Rolls Royce Car Club, but members of their committee attended our July day and were so impressed with the venue that they are now going to invite the Bentley Driver's Club and two other prestige car clubs to attend on the day and will now allow us to advertise the day – discreetly. It won't be a big Open Day, but obviously our members will be told to keep Sunday 30th October free, if they would like to come and see some very nice cars! Another big event coming up is the Wentworth Quilters two day exhibition in September, and that is really worth coming to look at!

120th Birthday Celebrations – The time is fast approaching and you may have noticed when you arrived that work on the Children's Garden is progressing – the roses are in and we do thank Finbarr O'Leary from Swanes Nursery for coming out and planting them for us. Special thanks to Holroyd Council for all the work they have done preparing the area and garden beds, and we are sure that it is all going to look wonderful by the time October comes around. New turf is to be laid and some further plantings in the rose gardens and fountain garden bed will happen in the next couple of weeks.

Work on the book on the History of Linnwood is progressing and we have purchased a photo from the Powerhouse Museum of the shield presented to George McCredie by the City of Sydney for the work he did in the Rocks area, and have also been given permission from the State Library to use some of the photos that were taken at the time. We will use a couple of them in the book and the rest will be used for display purposes. The more research we have done, the more we find that McCredie really was an amazing fellow – having the forethought to commission photographs to be taken of the living conditions at the time and the work that was done to cleanse the Rocks of the Bubonic Plague - these are all contained in a 6-volume set at the State Library – nearly 400 photographs! I have some here to show you – they are only small, but you will get the general idea - and they will be a much bigger size for the display.

Grants – As you would be aware, we completed the work for the 2009 Community Building Partnership Grant at the end of last year – and were successful in receiving further money for the 2010 round, to replace the wiring in the house. This work is yet to commence, with meetings with the Council and the Heritage Office Conservation Team members still in progress. Unfortunately time is ticking away and we would really like to get this project up and running but as always, red tape gets in the way.

We did apply but were unsuccessful in our application for a CDSE Grant from Clubs Holroyd. We had applied for funding to buy a stove and dishwasher to make the kitchen more attractive and user friendly for hirers and the Friends – but looks like we will still have to continue washing up in the pink dish – sorry ladies!

Property news – Unfortunately Linnwood, and to a lesser extent the Dormitory Building, have been the subject of some vandalism and theft over the past couple of weeks with *every* downpipe and some guttering being ripped off Linnwood, including some from the south end of the front verandah. It was quite distressing to see what had been done around the whole house and we just have to hope that the price of copper plummets so that no further damage is done. We are waiting to see if and when the Council will effect repairs and replacement of the pipes and guttering that are missing.

Current issues – As many of you are aware, there have been some articles in the local papers recently regarding Linnwood, the Friends, the Council and the Guildford Leagues Club, and we would like to make our position clear. The Friends of Linnwood have never waived in their commitment to 'protecting and preserving Linnwood for the community' and to 'actively promote Linnwood as a community asset' as set out in our Aims and Objectives. As such, when Holroyd Council displayed their Draft LEP 2010 and we realised that the property had been zoned Low Density Residential, the committee, on behalf of the Friends of Linnwood, submitted a letter of objection. We understand that due to new State Government Guidelines, all properties which had previously been zoned 'Special Use' such as churches and schools, and including Linnwood, could no longer be zoned that way, and that these properties had to take on the zoning of the surrounding properties – in Linnwood's case, 'Residential'. We objected on the basis that this zoning could open the door for subdivision and development of the estate, and requested that Council increase the minimum lot size to that of the area of the estate, to negate the possibility of any subdivision.

In February this year, the estate was gazetted as Crown Land in two parcels, the Linnwood Estate Trust and the Tamplin Road Estate Trust, to be managed separately by Holroyd City Council and the Lands Administration Ministerial Corporation. It would appear that we were mistaken in thinking that becoming Crown Land would 'save' the site, no matter what the dedicated use implied. In Council's revised Draft LEP 2011, we found that the parcel of land known as the Tamplin Road Estate Trust, had been re-zoned Medium Density Residential. Again, we have submitted a letter of objection to this zoning, deeming it to be an inappropriate use of the site, and questioning the reasoning behind changing the zoning from low to medium density, when the surrounding neighbourhood is low density.

Recently we were invited to attend a photo shoot at Linnwood, something that has happened on numerous occasions over the past years, and as on previous occasions, we accepted in good faith on the basis that the article was to promote Linnwood. We were not advised that there would be other groups invited or that the Member for Fairfield was instigating a 'No Privatisation' campaign for the site. After the article appeared in the local media, we were very disappointed to hear of comments being made that we were in 'collusion' with Guildford Leagues Club in our objection to the re-zoning of the Tamplin Road Estate Trust, and we categorically refute those comments – we have no ties with the Leagues Club or the Member for Fairfield other than the occasional conversation - as I'm sure many other members of the community and Council do.

Holroyd City Council, as Managers of the Linnwood Estate Trust, have stated that they do not have the money required to spend on Linnwood, without receiving funds from the sale of the Tamplin Road Estate Trust. At the Council meeting of 2nd August, a motion was put forward and carried, to cease all expenditure on Linnwood House until the future of the Tamplin Road frontage is resolved. This immediately raised some concerns in relation to ongoing costs such as security patrols, fire alarm monitoring and any future general and emergency repairs, including the repair and or replacement of the stolen downpipes and guttering. The committee wrote to the Mayor, seeking clarification, and received the following response:

"..... All urgent maintenance requirements will be attended to, and security patrols and fire alarm monitoring will remain in place. Grounds maintenance will be suspended for the time being as this is not considered an urgent matter.

"Council accepted the role of Trust Manager on the understanding, based on discussions with NSW government representatives, that the Tamplin Road frontage would be sold or leased to provide funds for the restoration of Linnwood. The Government had made it quite clear that no other funds would be provided for any costs associated with the restoration of Linnwood House or the management of the estate.

"Council wrote to the Premier on 3 June 2011 requesting a firm commitment to funding for the restoration by 30 August 2011. Unless this assurance is received Council may move to revoke the current Trust arrangement."

We believe that the discussions as to Council receiving funding from the sale or lease of the Tamplin Road frontage were made with the previous State Government and wonder if the current government has any obligation to honour those discussions.

We, as the Friends, would prefer to see 'conservation' of the house rather than restoration – there are only two rooms in the house with any real original fabric intact, the remainder of the house needs to be made usable and user friendly – the whole point of our campaign has been to see the house used for and by the community as much as possible and would suggest that small projects be undertaken to ensure this rather than the huge cost of restoration.

Talk of subdividing the Tamplin Road frontage has been going on for some years now, and nothing has happened, apart from erecting a fence along the proposed subdivision line. Even if the current government agreed to start proceedings right now to subdivide and sell or lease that parcel of land, the time frame could be 12 months or more before Council was to receive any funding. What happens to Linnwood in the meantime? With only urgent maintenance being attended to and the grounds not being maintained, our concern would be that the property will deteriorate further, appear unkempt and invite further vandalism.

We sincerely hope that a solution can be reached in the very near future and that Council may be able to clarify some of the issues mentioned to the satisfaction of not only the Friends of Linnwood, but to the community as a whole.

We will allow time during the meeting for discussion, to try and answer any questions you may have.

To continue Today is our Annual General Meeting and positions on the committee of the Friends of Linnwood will be available to financial members. If you would like to become more involved in what is happening, please consider becoming part of the committee which meets one night a month and also keeps in touch by email and phone between times. Before adjourning the Public Meeting and moving on to the AGM, there are a number of people and organisations that we need to publicly thank for their continued support, such as:

Holroyd City Council – for their continued support and (up to now) maintaining the grounds and having them look pristine for our Open Days; for continuing to host our website (Helen and I are now able to update it ourselves, thanks to some training by Rachel and Ian); to Diane Jogia and her department for continuing to support us by doing the mailouts to members; and to Clr Cummings and Diane for their assistance on the 120th Birthday Planning Committee.

Our Volunteers – to all those members who put their hands up to help on our Open Days – and how we do need and appreciate your help! Thank you to all who give their time – we couldn't do what we do without you – especially those who do the washing up! Our Gardening and Craft ladies – they still amaze us with the amount of money they raise for the gardens – thank you to all.

Holroyd Art & Craft Society – thank you for your support and attendance at each and every Open Day –
Other stall holders – many of whom attend each and every time to add some colour and interest to the Open Days.

Pioneers – not only do they share the property with us, but they have also been participating in our Open Days by holding a Trash'n'Treasure stall as their own fundraiser, and we hope that they have been able to raise much needed funds. We thank them for allowing visitors to use their amenities.

The Friends – and that's what many of you have become – we see many of you at each and every event, or if you can't make it, you show your support by renewing your membership – and it all helps!

The Committee - Again, it's been a pleasure working with this committee and I offer them all my personal thanks for the time they have put in over the past 12 months – it hasn't quite been the 'quiet' year we might have hoped for – maybe next year? One can only hope. Would you please join with me in thanking John & Christine McKenna, Helen Olde, Pat O'Brien, Coral Hamilton, Pam Zopf, Pam Richardson, Adriana de Haas, Michael Griggs and John Walz for their commitment to Linnwood over the past year.

My apologies for such a long report – but a lot has been happening and we do like to keep you as informed as possible.

Please stay and enjoy the rest of the afternoon. Pat and I hope to entertain you with a bit of light relief after all the official bits, with our presentation of "Reminiscing – Postcards and Photographs of Days Gone By" – and then you really will need a cuppa!

Thank you all once again for your support.

Treasurer's Report

John McKenna presented the Treasurer's Report.

Ordinary Account: Opening balance for June was \$76,192.84.

	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
Income	\$301.00	\$7,112.70
Expenditure	\$25.00	\$2,422.83

Closing Balance as at 31 July was \$81,860.09.

Investment Account: Opening Balance for June was \$18,586.87.

	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
Income	\$163.96	Nil
Expenditure	Nil	Nil

Closing balance as at 31 July was \$18,750.03

Total cash at bank and cash on hand as at 31 July was \$101,383.12, with total current liabilities \$1,149.36.

Income for June and July mostly came from tours/functions and the July Open day. Expenditure was in line with costs associated with the tours/functions and the July Open day.

Moved by Gerry O'Brien, seconded by Michael Griggs, that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. The motion was carried.

General Business

John McKenna then invited the Mayor of Holroyd, Cllr Peter Monaghan, to address the meeting and take questions. This part of the Public Meeting was taped. Rather than reproduce word-for-word, and as some of the verbage was not very clear on the tape, the following is a summary of the Mayor's address, questions from the floor, and his responses.

The Mayor referred to the fight to save Linnwood when the previous State Government announced they were going to sell the property for commercial development, and that Council was supportive of the community's campaign.

The Mayor advised that since Council was appointed Trustee, they have corresponded and met with the State Government's Heritage Department in respect to the future of Linnwood. The Department has made it quite clear that they don't have any money to spend on Linnwood, and the only way to ensure funds are available to improve the house is to sell the Tamplin Road parcel of land. The Mayor reinforced to members that Council does not own the estate. The State Government is the owner, and therefore Council is not in a position, as they do not have the money, to spend the estimated \$2.5 million required to restore the house.

The State Government said the property had to be rezoned to medium density, similar to that of the surrounding area, as it is their belief that this rezoning would maximise the return if/when the Tamplin Road site was sold. Council has again written to the Department to find out what is the situation with the property but they are in the dark as much as anyone else.

There has been some suggestion that Guildford Leagues Club wants the land, but the club is not in a financial position to either buy or lease the Tamplin Road site.

There was recently a resolution passed by Council that no further money is to be spent on Linnwood until Tamplin Road site is sold. The Mayor confirmed that security patrols would continue, and urgent maintenance work would still be carried out, i.e. plumbing. In addition, any work to be done that was signed off before the resolution was passed, would be carried out.

Council has met with the local police in respect to the loan of surveillance cameras and increasing their presence in the area. The recent theft of the copper pipes and guttering from the house is of concern

A FOL member asked the Mayor if the pipes and guttering could be replaced with plastic or similar. The Mayor advised that Council will need to check with the Heritage Department if aluminium or Colorbond could be used instead.

The Mayor also made it clear that, much to his dismay, Council would look at handing Linnwood back to the State Government if a sale of the back lot did not happen, as Council does not have \$2.5 million to spend on the house, along with ongoing costs of repairs and maintenance. He advised that it has been suggested that Council apply a special levy on rates to be put aside for Linnwood, however Council rejected that idea as it was not fair on ratepayers and would not solve the problem anyway.

The Mayor is extremely disappointed that Council had to pass the resolution in respect to ceasing funding, but they are still trying to obtain information from the State Government about what is happening. Council can then move forward, one way or the other.

The Mayor also expressed disappointment at the press release recently put out by the Member for Fairfield, indicating that Council is talking about selling off the front section. He reiterated that the land is not Council's to sell. They have been in negotiation with the Department with the understanding that the Tamplin Road site would be sold or leased in order to raise funds to fix up the house – that was the original intention. The State Government made it clear to Council they would not be putting any money towards it – Council would have to find the funds. But now we're at an impasse where no-one knows what's going in.

Following a question from the floor, the Mayor confirmed again that Council is Trustee for the land incorporating Linnwood, Faulds House and McCredie Cottage. The Lands Administration Ministerial Corporation is Trustee for the Tamplin Road site.

A FOL member queried the \$2.5 million mentioned. Now that every house, every street, has been taken over by units, open space is something we should be treasuring, and saying we'll hand it back to the State Government, I think the battle should be to keep it. The member asked what is the total expenditure of Holroyd Council each year. The Mayor advised they spend \$20,000 on mowing the lawns at Linnwood, not counting costs in relation to security etc. However he confirmed that Council's budget for Holroyd is around \$80 million per year.

The member thought that \$2.5 million would be an investment for the future – "Linnwood is open space, it's something that brings the community together, it's a reasonable investment. We see all of these units go up. Once there was a house, now there are 10 units, that's 10 lots of rates that the Council is getting, and then I'm told that "we're not actually making any money out of the units". I just can't see it – I'd like to think that someone at Council would be brave enough to stand up and fight for this for future generations because open space is something we're going to need."

(Applause from attendees)

A FOL member who lives outside Holroyd asked who is our local member, and was he interested in the house. The mayor advised the local member is Guy Zangari, Member for Fairfield, who was under the impression that the club was interested in the Tamplin Road site on a 90-year lease. However there is still so much confusion about the whole issue that Council just doesn't know.

Another member spoke about her "suspicious mind - downpipes went up, downpipes come down. Is there someone being manipulated to just keep annoying you?" The Mayor believed the thief may be the same person who ripped all the copper wiring out of McCredie Cottage – he is known to police.

Vanessa McNeill (former Holroyd Councillor) asked the Mayor if it was possible for Council to at least continue to maintain the grounds. She is aware it's a lot of money, ratepayers' money, but it would be very hard for the Friends as a group to mow the lawns. Bearing in mind we have some big open days coming up, as well as the 120th anniversary. Vanessa said that if the grounds aren't maintained to a professional standard, they are going to start looking very unkempt, it will start to look very unloved, and she is afraid it will attract "some of the naughty people again". She is aware of the Mayor's genuine regard for the house and Australian heritage, and is hoping that, as a local resident and ratepayer, that Council will reconsider the motion.

(Applause from attendees)

Another FOL member made the point that the Tamplin Road site is our parking area. If we don't have that it affects our Open Days. The Mayor advised that until we find out what's going on, depending on what happens, we might have to look at alternative arrangements.

Another question from a member – "Do we really have to restore the house? What if we keep it, and keep it alive. We don't need it to go back to how it used to be." The Mayor advised that \$2.5 million isn't going to make it elaborate at all, that would cover the bare necessities. The roofing alone would cost quite a bit and that needs to be done.

The Mayor advised that Council does apply for grants, and he is aware that the Friends do as well, to their credit.

Another member queried that if the State Government owns the back parcel of land and sells it, what guarantee is there that they'll give Council the money. The Mayor advised that negotiations were based on the sale of that land, and initially State Treasury was going to keep 50%. Council argued the point and it appears that any proceeds from the sale or lease would go towards bringing the house up to scratch – that's the premise that was known all the time, and that hasn't changed.

However, the Mayor emphasised that Council is still trying to find out what the State Government is doing, what is the intention, and what money will come through – that's the real concern.

A member advised that he has taken photos of the length of Tamplin Road, all the way from Denistoun Street to Guildford Road – it is full of cars. If the site is zoned medium density, with 2 or 3 storey townhouses, there will be chaos in the street. He knows most of the people on Tamplin Road and they all oppose any redevelopment of that site.

The Mayor appreciated the concerns, but again reiterated that Council doesn't know what the State Government's intentions are at this stage.

The member said that he was proud to have something like Linnwood in our area – “this is something you find on the North Shore”.

The Mayor advised that “it is Council's hope, as well as the Friends', that there will be some commercial component to see that money is coming in – we don't want a museum – we want something commercial that will contribute to the house. That's our wish too.”

Another member asked what do developers pay Council for every unit they build in this area. Why not raise their anti and get them put something towards Linnwood. He is aware that developers pay so much per unit to Council.

Councillor Greg Cummings advised that this amount is capped by Section 94, but it's taxed, and has to be used for specific things in the Holroyd area. When queried “isn't Linnwood specific?” Councillor Cummings advised that, at the end of the day, the State Government has the legislation – Council has to follow that legislation.

The Mayor advised that Section 94 came into being to improve amenities of the community, however the State Government has taken away many aspects of Section 94 – Council can't even buy library books now, which is quite bizarre.

A member commented that we can't expect anything from the State Government because they have a big hole in the budget – “they don't think heritage is essential”. The Mayor stressed again that Council is trying to find out what's going on with the back parcel before we take any further action.

Another member asked if the Friends can carry on with our current program, and the Mayor confirmed that it is not Council's intention to stop what we're doing – “I'm not going to turn off the electricity.”

Vanessa McNeill asked what is Council's next game plan. The Mayor replied that they have contacted the State Government again and asked for a meeting, and Council staff are chasing them by phone, but it is taking time due to change of government and changes in staff.

Vanessa commented that she can see this blocking up and we might need to “go to the barricades”. It would be very easy for the State Government, if Council hands the estate back, to sell all the land. The Mayor agreed – with the State's financial problems it's a possibility – but before we go to the barricades let's find out where we're at, and what are the government's intentions.

Vanessa said that we were all really happy when the estate was gazetted Crown Land but as it was pointed out to her, that can be changed at the stroke of a pen.

John McKenna advised that it's been dedicated Crown Land.

The Mayor is concerned that former State Governments' history of looking after some of our older buildings is “demolition by stealth”, and noted the situation with the old Headmaster's Cottage in Merrylands West. The government abandoned it, it was vandalised and looted. It should have been boarded up but that never happened, and the then State Government was willing to sell it off - but Council now has control of that building.

John McKenna thanked the Mayor for addressing the meeting and answering questions, and also welcomed Clrs Ross Grove and Vasee Rajadurai who joined the meeting during the Q&A session with the Mayor.

Ninth Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Linnwood Inc

The Public Meeting was then suspended at 3.05pm in order that the Ninth Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Linnwood Inc could be held.

Refer to separate minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on today's date.

The Public Meeting resumed at 3.20pm.

Guest Speaker

Dorothy and Pat then gave a PowerPoint presentation of postcards and photographs from the early 1900's, covering the Holroyd local area and other suburbs of Sydney, together with some amusing and cute postcards.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Friends of Linnwood will be held at 2.00pm on Sunday 9 October 2011. Unfortunately the guest speaker previously confirmed has now sent his apologies. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting when hopefully we will have secured another speaker.

Raffle

The raffles were won by Adriana de Haas and Gerry O'Brien.

Meeting Closed

The meeting closed at 4.20pm.

Confirmed:

_____ Date: _____

Membership Renewals

You can still renew your membership if you haven't already done so. If you've misplaced your form, call Helen on 9807 3224 and she will send you a copy, or you can renew at the next Open House on Sunday 11 September 2011.

Perpetual Members, Honorary Members and those who are Paid up in Advance, do not need to renew.