



Chair's Report – 2016-17

It feels like we have a lot of change in the wind at present and that comes after a year of ongoing development and growth. As such we have a lot happening – more than I can mention here in any depth. So I want to make clear that these are highlights from the year – and that the thank yous in this report have some gaps!

For more detail, I refer you to the annual review that Kate has put together. There are copies available to the meeting and we will also have these up on our website in the near future along with this report.

First up, before I start looking at individual projects, I want to thank the people on our committee – and who have been on our committee - for the work that they have done this year. I'm incredibly grateful that they choose to lend us their talent, interest and work in amongst their already busy lives and I really value the different strengths they all bring to building our community here in wider Halswell.

The growth in our work is both daunting and exciting. We are having to seek more funding and to think hard about how we can generate income to support what we do.

After getting our first COGS grant this year to support policy development and administration, we were surprised to be chosen by the DIA office to meet the Minister and talk to her about our work and the benefits that community funding produces. Thank you to the DIA for the grant and vote of confidence in our work.

A large part of our capacity is the amount of volunteer work that gets done. Thank you to everyone that puts time into this community however large or small you feel your contribution to be. A recent conservative estimate across all of our projects, is that people gave well over 2000 hours to this community over the last year and we suspect more like 2500 hours. Our community is very much better off for that generosity and this number is much greater than we made as part of a similar assessment last year. And that does not take into account the many, many volunteers in clubs and groups in Halswell. My challenge to you all is to get out there and give a wee bit of your time to your community in

whatever way feels comfortable. The rewards of working with others this way are considerable!

Community Information

This work is funded by the Christchurch City Council Strengthening Communities fund and relies on a great deal of voluntary work.

I had cause to reflect after the Port Hills fires in February, on how things have changed over the last 7 or so. Our Facebook group (that currently has over 5600 members) was a fantastic source of information, and ran hot with a range of offers of help for those affected by the fires. Along with this group, and our other platforms – the Halswell Community Website, Neighbourly, our Halswell E-Newsletter and our other Facebook groups, we are a much better connected community and therefore a lot more able to organise than we were when the first of the Christchurch earthquakes happened in September 2010.

On our Facebook group is huge and active and much comes out of it. For me, perhaps the most exciting initiative to emerge as a direct result of the group was the post fire event “bolted” onto the March market that was driven by three–four members of that group.

Many thanks go to Giarne, Sarah, Keri and Kate for the work that they do to look after the Halswell Community Group and also the people in that group who support our admin work. The amount of work just keeping an eye on things and discussing issues that arise is considerable at times but is having a very positive effect on the way people interact. We still have a few glitches but we also have much constructive and helpful traffic.

Our Halswell Businesses Facebook page is also active, growing and a great place to find local businesses.

The Halswell Newsletter continues to come out monthly and I love to see the articles and notices that people send in to make this what it is. Lynne Bull was appointed as Newsletter Editor last year and Deborah Harding Browne continues to write articles about local places and people. Countless others contribute news and notices.

After updating the information on the Halswell Website, Hugh Donald has recently been working through the process of upgrading the site so it is more secure. We hope to have the new version up very soon. A massive thanks to Hugh for the 100s of volunteer hours he has put in as a service to our community.

Another aspect of our community connections work is our Welcome Bags. Thanks to a grant from the New Zealand Red Cross, and help from many people across the community, and our committee in particular, we have

filled a second lot of welcome bags and are set to put together a third very soon.

Market

2016 saw us run markets throughout the winter for the first time, and we plan to do the same in 2017. Thanks to our dedicated stallholders, who turn up rain or shine, we have even managed to weather three consecutive markets held in wet weather over the last summer. Given the amount of effort that goes into preparing, and executing the market by everyone it is very disappointing to experience so much bad weather. We were all very grateful for the perfect April day that was our last market, and the record numbers that came in as a result.

A huge thank you to Keri Glassenbury our highly capable and organised market coordinator, and to Kate who continues to put in a lot of time. Both have also put in significant voluntary time to make the market run well. We also have to thank their husbands Dave and Jason who are regularly roped in to help.

Thanks to the team of volunteers who regularly help with setting up, and running the market, and to St John of God Hauora Trust who support the market by providing a beautiful venue. Thanks also to the RATA foundation, who have continued to fund this initiative, to the great musicians who have played at the markets and last but definitely not least, thanks to our fantastic group of stallholders. A special mention goes to the stallholders who have supported us through thick and thin since we began running markets in 2013 and those who turned up in the rain over the last year. We really could not have done this without you.

Late last year we were approached by Simon Mortlock, with the idea of running a weekly market as part of the new Halswell Commons subdivision. This is an opportunity and a challenge that we are really looking forward to, and if all goes to plan, later this year, we will begin running a weekly farmers and craft market in Halswell.

Halswell Liaison Group

While the Halswell Community Project have attended the CCC-run Halswell Liaison group for some years, we took over running it early in 2017. We are changing the purpose of it a little and see it as a tool for facilitating discussion round what is needed in our community and how we might achieve that by working together with other groups and individuals. We'd love to see more people involved in this initiative.

Timebank

I mentioned the idea of timebanking in Halswell last year. So far, very little has happened on the surface. We hope to set up a Halswell Timebank sometime this year as projects and capacity allow. We see there is considerable potential for a Timebank to connect people and help local groups right across Halswell and we feel we are closer to getting some action on the ground.

Community Garden

We provide a small amount of assistance to the community garden which has been supported with funding from the Red Cross, Halswell New World and the Old Vicarage. The gardeners are a small group and are always looking for assistance with gardening. It has been great to see other groups such as the Wales St. Kindy being involved in the garden.

Fruit and Vege Co-op

Halswell is a very small hub in the Christchurch South Fruit and Vege Co-op. Thanks to Ros and Mary who look after this and provide help with packing each Wednesday morning.

Looking Forward

We have a lot in front of us this year. As always, what we achieve will depend on volunteers and funding. As we continue our work, we are noticing more energy for community in Halswell as people settle in to new homes or gradually sort out the issues that have emerged from the earthquakes.

Our community over this time has become increasingly multicultural, hence we have begun talking to a range of groups in the area about how we might support that change and use the opportunities that such change offers. At the same time, we are keen to maintain the many initiatives that we have started and try to make them more sustainable. We now have a good base from which to work and it is a case of building on that base to help our community flourish.

We have been working with Councillor Anne Galloway, Community Board members Ross McFarlane and Debbie Mora, and council staff to find a way to put the old library building to use as a Community Hub. We are glad to say that we have been successful in convincing the council to lease it to us for a 6 month trial. Over the coming months, we hope to be learning to run such a resource along with a number of other community groups and community services as the space allows. Many, many thanks to the Riccarton Wigram Community Board for the considerable amount of money they have allocated for the CCC to bring the building back into use.

Chrys Horn, 9th May 2017.