

# DONKEY SERENADE

Vol 34. October 2021 | Highfield Donkeys Incorporated Society Newsletter



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## AGM held just before lockdown

**Just avoiding the lockdown, the Donkeys Inc. held its AGM on Monday 16th August 2021 at the Betty Paxton Room, Mahurangi Community Centre. Here are some extracts.**

The new committee is as follows: Chairperson - Jane Kelsey, Secretary - Helen Whiteley, Treasurer - Marion Jones, Donkey Manager - Peter Caccia-Birch, Membership Secretary - Liz Duhs, Louise Bartlett - External Communications Co-ordinator, Allan Ford - Project Manager, Jenny van der Mespel - Alison Roberts Family Representative and Chris Mellor - Committee Member.

Peter Caccia-Birch gave a eulogy for Peter Couling who had been Chairman of Donkey Inc. since its foundation. Peter had known Peter for 30 years from the time when they were involved in the Tomorata Dramatic Society group. Peter was not only the Chairman of Donkey Inc., but an active member of the Wellsford Lions, a walking group and a cycling group as well as the MG club. He used to loan his sports Jaguar car for the arrival of Santa on Donkey day. Peter will be missed by all.

Peter Caccia-Birch then reported on the 7 donkeys who he informed were all fit and well.

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*"Peter (Couling) was not only the Chairman of Donkeys Inc., but an active member of the Wellsford Lions, a walking, cycling and MG club... He will be missed by all."*

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Allan Ford was presented with a Life Membership for all his services to the Donkey Inc and Highfield Garden Reserve. He helped plan and build the hay sheds, 2 board walks and the kauri signs. Congratulations to Allan!



**Peter Caccia-Birch presenting Allan Ford with a Life Membership.**

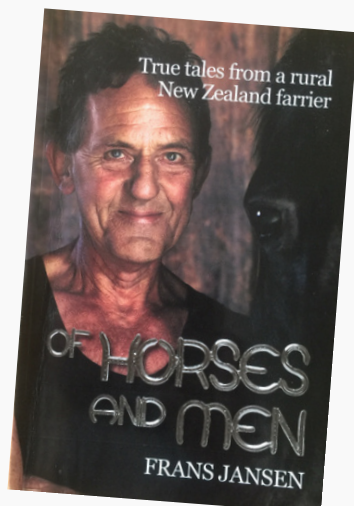
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**AGM Cont.**

The guest speaker was Frans Jansen a professional farrier who had written a book of his experiences called *Of Horses and Men* with shoeing 600 horses and 85 donkeys.

He had trained as a surveyor and came to New Zealand, married and became a sharemilker, eventually becoming farrier after being taught how to shoe a horse in 3 days.

He mentioned that donkeys were worse to shoe as you had no clues



**Guest speaker Frans Jansen's book, *Of Horses and Men*.**

as to when they were going to bite you. He said more people have been killed by donkeys than horses.



## The work never stops

Truffle, Toby, Tina, Tara, Tilly II, Topsy and Turvy have all still needed their daily visits, feeding (and cuddles) from Donkey Manager Peter Caccia-Birch, despite Auckland being in lockdown. No doubt they have had a few visitors from locals, taking their daily allowance of exercise walking through the reserve.

## NEW DONATION BOX INSTALLED

Earlier this year, the donation box was damaged and the contents stolen - which left our community saddened. Burt Plumbing kindly donated \$100 in response to the theft. We'd also like to acknowledge David Wasell who modified the existing donation box, with the new padlock supplied by Kelley Jones from Mason Containers Ltd, all at no cost. And of course thanks to our very own Allan Ford, for reinstalling the box back in its original place.



**Allan Ford reinstalling the new donations box.**

## Meet our new Park Ranger Rose Crooks



My name is Rose Crooks and I am the new Community Park Ranger for Rodney / Hibiscus and Bays. Originally, I am from the Bay of Islands and moved to the North Shore in High School. I am excited to be working so near to where I spent my teenage years. Following school, I studied Biological Science at the University of Auckland before working for DOC in Hamilton. After this, I spent three years working for Council as the Park Ranger of Conservation at Ambury and Mutukaroa Regional Parks. After a stint in Australia, I came home to work for DOC on Rangitoto / Motutapu, before starting my new role with the Council. I am excited to work more closely with community groups and all the passionate people who are in them.



We have a new official Facebook page called **Donkeys at Highfield**. For all the latest news and up to date information, please follow us at: [www.facebook.com/donkeyshighfield](https://www.facebook.com/donkeyshighfield)



## Hundreds of natives have been planted



New planting has gone in around the main pond and lily pond.

Owing to the Covid climate, Auckland Council were not able to supply all our native plants. Hopefully they will go on next winters list. However, 525 natives were supplied and planted on our tuesday working bees. These included: *Carex Sedge* - infill around lily pond and new boardwalk; *Cordyline Australis* - infill in orchard and in bush block; *Coprosma Robusta* - lily pond track; *Phormium Cookianum* - around main duck pond, and *Manuka* - along western boundary in bush block.

### UPCOMING EVENT

## DONKEY DAY – SAVE THE DATE!

March's Donkey Day was unfortunately cancelled due to Auckland being inbetween levels. However we are hoping December's Donkey Day can go ahead. The proposed date for our Christmas event is **Saturday 4th December 2021**. So pop it in your diary and bring the family along for free entertainment including donkey rides, games, sausage sizzles and a visit from Santa! A community day not to be missed.



## Membership subscriptions are now due

Memberships due for the 2021/2022 financial year can be paid by Direct Credit to:  
**ASB 12 3095 0254516 00.**

Please include your **name** and **telephone number** in the reference details. Memberships are \$10 per household per year.

Set and forget by using Internet Banking feature on most banks where you repeat the payment year after to year automatically. Alternatively contact Liz Duhs, Membership Secretary, Highfield Donkeys Inc., 483 Mahurangi East Road, Rodney 0920. Or email: [liz.duhs@gmail.com](mailto:liz.duhs@gmail.com)

**Your continuing support is much appreciated.**