Minutes of a Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
held in the Council Chambers, District Administration Building, Seymour Street, Blenheim
on THURSDAY, 27 APRIL 2017 commencing at 9.00 am.

Present
Councillors D D Oddie (Chairperson), G A Hope (Deputy), J A Arbuckle, T E Hook, C J Brooks, L M Shenfield, N P Taylor, Mayor Leggett, Mr E R Beech (Rural representative)

Also Present
Councillors G I T Evans and M A Peters

In Attendance
Mr H R Versteegh (Manager, Regulatory Department) and Nicole Chauval (Committee Secretary).

Apologies
Clrs Shenfield/Brooks:
That the apology for non attendance from Clr J L Andrews be noted.
Carried

Members were advised that the presentations only, i.e. not general discussion following the presentations, for items 4 ‘Molecular Monitoring of fish Farm Effects on Seabed Biology’ and item 5 ‘A 1000 Year History of Seabed Change in Te Hoiere/Pelorus Sound’ would be recorded. A copy of the video would be made available to the public via Council’s website.

R.16/17.381 Declaration of Interests
Clr Hope declared an interest in Item 8 – Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards 2016/17 - Update

R.16/17.382 Resource Hearing Sub-Committee Decisions
Clrs Brooks/Shenfield:
That the Resource Hearing Sub-Committee Decision as contained within the report dated 1 March 2017 (U160620) and 9 March 2017 (U161124) be received and the recommendation adopted.
Carried

R.16/17.383 Resource Hearing Commissioner Decisions
Clrs Brooks/Shenfield:
That the Resource Hearing Commissioner Decisions as contained within the reports dated 22 February 2017 (U161260) be received and the recommendations adopted.
Carried
ATTENDANCE: Dr Steve Urlich, Environmental Scientist was present for the following two items and Dr Xavier Pochon and Dr Susie Wood, Cawthron Marine Scientists were present for the following item.

R.16/17.384 Molecular Monitoring of Fish Farm Effects on Seabed Biology  
E325-008-001-05, E325-016-002-01

The Cawthron Research report on improving the efficiency of monitoring fish farm effects on the seabed was presented to members. A copy of the report was included with the agenda for members’ information. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in Trim – Record No. 1781298).

Members were advised that the current monitoring of fish farm effects is costly and time consuming with time lags of 4-5 months from science providers taking seabed sediment samples in October/November to the results being reported in February/March each year. This means by the time the Council comes to consider the monitoring results, the environment may have changed, so it cannot be determined whether any remedial actions will be necessary or accurately targeted.

It was reported that to address this, the Cawthron Institute secured funding in 2014 to explore the use of DNA analysis of bacterial and protozoan assemblages for calculating Enrichment Stage (ES), in place of the intensive enumeration of benthic invertebrates. The aim of the research was to reduce reporting times and monitoring costs by assessing the usefulness of cutting-edge molecular analyses to characterise effects of fish farms on the seabed. The method used is known as environmental DNA/RNA metabarcoding.

Members were advised that Cawthron found that different assemblages of bacteria had a strong relationship to different ES levels associated with different levels of fish farm effects. They have termed this a multi-trophic metabarcoding index (MBI). The protozoan (foraminifera) analysis did not work as well in providing sufficiently clear patterns to be confidently used as an ES tool.

It was noted that the other key finding was that DNA analysis was sufficient to determine the bacterial assemblages. This will result in cost efficiencies as the more expensive and technically challenging companion RNA analysis was found not to be necessary.

Members were advised that due to the specialist nature of the science, Council staff sought comment on the report from its international expert on monitoring the environmental effects of salmon farming, Professor Kenneth Black, and his colleague Dr Tom Wilding, of the SAMS. The review was very positive to the scientific work undertaken by Cawthron with some minor improvements suggested to the analysis and display of the results but overall they concurred with the findings and endorsed the recommendations.

There was general discussion on the benefits of the metabarcoding tool and the need for some action plan to support and encourage this technology. It was suggested that Dr Urlich and the Benthic Standards Working Group are in a good position to provide recommendations to this Committee on an action plan. Members requested that Dr Urlich provide a report in six months to this Committee.

Crs Brooks /Hook:  
That the reports be received.  
Carried

ATTENDANCE: Dr Sean Handley, NIWA Nelson was present for the following item.

R.16/17.385 A 1000 Year History of Seabed Change in  
Te Hoiere/Pelorus Sound  
E325-016-001-03

The report on seabed sediment coring in Kenepuru Sound and Beatrix Bay undertaken by the National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Institute (NIWA) was presented to members. The report was attached to the agenda for members’ information. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in Trim – Record No. 1781301).

Members were advised that the Council, Ministry for Primary Industries and Marine Farming Association co-funded a seabed sediment coring study by NIWA in the Kenepuru Sound and Beatrix Bay. The report reconstructs past ecosystem change over the course of 1000+ years.
It was noted that sedimentation rates have increased substantially since European settlement in the late 1800s and have not abated. There have been significant changes to shellfish communities and a lack of recovery of extensive green-lipped mussel beds since they were dredged out in the 1960s. The past extent of mussel beds appears to have been linked to the consequences of widespread burning and clearing of native forests for pasture in the late 1800s.

It was reported that it is clear from the research that a tipping point has been passed, where the ecosystem is maintained in a disturbed state with excessive sedimentation smothering the seafloor. The main sources contributing to contemporary sediment accumulation rates are the inputs from the Pelorus and Kaituna Rivers, pine forestry and subsoils from slips associated with different land uses.

Members were advised that a coring study is now underway in the Havelock estuary to characterise the past and current sources of sediment, and to identify the land uses and sub-catchments which are contributing the most sediment to the Havelock inflow. It was noted that the recommendation from the report is that measures be taken to reduce and mitigate sediment inputs from different land uses.

Clrs Hook/The Mayor:
That the information be received.
Carried

ATTENDANCE: Emily Wilton, Air Quality Consultant were present for the following item.


The Annual Air Quality State of the Environment Report for the year 2016 was presented to members. A copy of the report was attached to the agenda for members’ information. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in Trim – Record No. 1781303).

It was reported that the Council is measuring PM$_{10}$ concentrations at two sites in Blenheim. In Redwoodtown a BAM monitor measures PM$_{10}$ levels every 10 minutes, while another type of monitor is providing daily average concentrations every three days from the Springlands area. It was noted that data from the Redwoodtown site is used for national reporting. The site in Springlands is not compliant as it does not measure continuously; but does provide valuable information for long term trend analysis as it is the longest running site in Marlborough.

It was noted that the maximum concentration of PM$_{10}$ allowed is a daily average of 50 micrograms per cubic metre (50µg/m$^3$). This level is permitted to be exceeded once in a 12 month period, every additional exceedance is considered a breach of the NES.

Members were advised that the monitoring site in Redwoodtown recorded three exceedances of 50µg/m$^3$ and two breaches of the NES for PM$_{10}$ during 2016. The highest concentration was measured on 9 June and reached 61µg/m$^3$ (24-hour average). This is a similar magnitude to concentrations measured in other years but lower than the 2015 maximum concentration of 79µg/m$^3$. The annual average concentration for Redwoodtown for 2016 was 18µg/m$^3$.

It was noted that the yearly average PM$_{10}$ concentration was 18µg/m$^3$, which is similar to previous years.

Members were advised that while peak concentrations have reduced by around 10% concentrations of PM$_{10}$ have increased during the overnight period, when comparing pre 2010 data to that from 2010 onwards. It was noted that two possible causes of the increase in overnight concentrations are most likely associated with the banking down of fires overnight or a sustained change in the meteorological conditions impacting on PM$_{10}$ concentrations between the hours of 10.00 pm and 6.00 am.

Clrs Arbuckle/Shenfield:
1. That the “Annual Air Quality Monitoring Report - Blenheim 2016” be received.
2. That the Council review measures to reduce PM$_{10}$ emissions including an emission inventory.
Carried

ATTENDANCE: The meeting adjourned at 11.04am and resumed at 11.16am.
ATTENDANCE: Peter Davidson, Groundwater Scientist was present for the following item.

**R.16/17.387 Progress Update on Project Investigating Declining Trend in Wairau Aquifer Levels and Refining Groundwater Quantity Allocation Limits**

The report to the Committee provided an update on progress towards understanding the causes of the long term declining trend in Wairau Aquifer recharge sector levels, and the timeline for the associated groundwater abstraction limit setting process. The 1D Heat Transport Modelling In The Wairau Aquifer, New Zealand and Quantifying river-groundwater interactions of New Zealand’s gravel-bed rivers: The Wairau Plain reports were attached to the agenda for members’ information. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in Trim – Record No. 1781304).

Members were advised that the Wairau Aquifer recharge rates vary at low Wairau River flows of less than 20m³/second, but are relatively static for channel flows of greater than 100m³/second at the Tuamarina flow recorder site. It follows that if Wairau River flows are lower for longer due to a combination of reasons, then Wairau Aquifer recharge rates will be lower as a result.

It was noted that the reservoir size of the Wairau Aquifer is smaller than previously estimated. It contains sufficient groundwater storage to sustain spring flows for the order of several months only, if recharge rates fall below the seasonal normal.

Natural Wairau Aquifer outputs from spring drainage match inputs from the Wairau River - cancelling each other out. This means aquifer storage governs the amount of groundwater available for consented abstraction, plus any rainfall recharge falling direct on the Wairau Plain land surface.

It was reported that the quantum of Wairau Aquifer groundwater storage required to sustain current spring flows is of the same order as rainfall recharge and abstraction.

Members were advised that the period from mid 2014 to autumn 2016 was exceptionally dry for the Wairau Plain, with effectively no rainfall recharge compounded by high groundwater abstraction by irrigators, and lower than normal rates of recharge from Wairau River channel losses. This resulted in the low summer aquifer levels and sluggish inter-seasonal rebound over winter/spring experienced during this period. It was noted that the 2016/17 summer irrigation season has been closer to normal in terms of rainfall, runoff, river flows and consented demand on water resources.

Mr Davidson advised that the recent seasonal variability in water inputs and outputs for the Wairau Aquifer does not account for the observed long term declining trend in well levels, however, this remains the focus of the project as it makes limit setting problematic.

Members were advised that to help disseminate technical advances as they come to hand to Wairau Plain water users, and explore management options for the Council, it would be useful to establish a permanent Wairau Aquifer Water Users Group. Members were advised that these types of groups were a cornerstone of water management in the Southern Valleys early 1980s up to the 2000/01 drought and very effective in solving water management issues.

Following discussion it was suggested that Council staff provide the Committee with a proposal on the make-up of the group. It was noted that the group does not have to be confirmed until the end of 2018.

**Clrs Brooks/Hope:**

1. That the reports 1D Heat Transport Modelling In The Wairau Aquifer, New Zealand and the Quantifying river-groundwater interactions of New Zealand’s gravel-bed rivers: The Wairau Plain be received.

2. That a Wairau Aquifer Water User Group be established.

**Carried**
ATTENDANCE: Peter Hamill, Senior Environmental Scientist was present for the following item.

**R.16/17.388  Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards 2016/17 - Update**

The report provided an update to the Committee on the recent Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards 2016/17.

Mr Hamill advised members that the Awards dinner was held on Friday, 31 March at the Marlborough Convention Centre and attended by approximately 220 guests including entrants, judges, sponsors and the general public. All of the 22 entrants were profiled and six category winners announced, along with an overall supreme winner.

It was noted that the Awards trustees are now working on developing a field day programme to showcase the achievements of the winners and encourage the wider sharing of knowledge and learnings from the various enterprises and businesses. This programme will be made available to Councillors where dates are confirmed.

Members were advised that Peter Hamill will be taking over the role of Council's Awards coordinator following Nicky Eade's departure.

Clrs Shenfield/Arbuckle:
That the information be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Rob Simons, Senior Biosecurity Officer was present for the following item.

**R.16/17.389  Biosecurity - Emerging Invasive Plant Threats**

The report to the Committee provided an update on the four invasive plant species in the Marlborough District considered being emerging biosecurity threats. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in Trim – Record No. 1781305).

Members were advised that the four new invasive plant species are Rough Horsetail (Equisetum hyemale), Tall Wheat Grass (Thinopyrum ponticum), Willow-leaved Hakea (Hakea salicifolia), Woolly Nightshade (Solanum mauritanium). It was noted that the four plants identified are limited in their distribution and are currently in a lag phase.

It was reported that Council's Biosecurity Section uses a surveillance programme to stay ahead of new and emerging biosecurity threats with potential threats coming to the Council's attention through active surveillance or from public reports. It was also noted that research into plant biology, threats and management techniques is also carried out to determine whether appropriate and effective control tools are available. This is critical if effective management plans are to be proposed and implemented.

Mr Simons advised that the Biosecurity Section continues to investigate these species to assess future threat and also determine whether effective control tools are available. It was noted that all of this information will feed into the current Regional Pest Plan Review where they may be considered as candidates for a longer term management programme with clear objectives.

Clrs Brooks/Taylor:
That the information be received.

Carried

**R.16/17.390  Wilding Conifer Management in Marlborough - An Update**

The report provided an update to the Committee on the various aspects of wilding conifer management that are occurring or are developing.
Members were advised that over the last 12-18 months there has been rapid change in the wilding conifer management landscape. It was noted that the success of the MSRT model in the Marlborough Sounds has seen the development of a new trust in South Marlborough looking to achieve similar success. This has occurred at a time when additional funding has been approved by the Crown and increased investment has started in the most high priority areas of the country, including Molesworth and the Waihopai (pending operational plans).

It was reported that the Trust is currently developing an operation plan and has applied for further funding. Members were advised that the Trust will provide a report on operations to the Committee at a future meeting.

It was reported that the successful implementation of the SMLRT strategic plan cannot solely rely upon new monies stemming from the Crown. As with the MSRT, enduring commitments from agencies in combination with sponsorship and third party funding for projects will be critical and adequate resources to implement operational plans at all levels will continue to be the single greatest risk to achieving management objectives.

Members were advised that the SMLRT platform in combination with a Regional Steering Group will see more cohesive management occurring for wilding conifers across Marlborough as a whole.

Clrs Hope/Hook:
That the information be received.
Carried

ATTENDANCE: Karen Winter, Environmental Health Officer, was present for the following item.

R.16/17.391 Update on Food Business Transition to the Food Act 2014 E350-004-009-02

The report to the Committee provided an update on the transition of Marlborough’s food businesses to the Food Act 2014. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in Trim – Record No. 1781306).

Members were advised that around 140 food businesses were involved in the first transition period. There are approximately 160 food businesses left to transition before 30 November 2018. These businesses will receive ongoing support from the Environmental Health Team to assist in the transition.

Clrs Taylor/Shenfield:
That the information be received.
Carried

ATTENDANCE: Shelley Lines, Environmental Health Officer, was present for the following item.

R.16/17.392 Bird Scaring Devices E360-006-01

The report provided a summary to the Committee on the bird scaring device rules and the approach taken to deal with bird scaring device complaints. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in Trim – Record No. 1781308).

Members were advised that there are a number of bird crop protection methods used on Marlborough Vineyards, including netting, visual deterrents, natural predators and audible devices. It was noted that Council’s compliance group receive a number of complaints during vineyard crop protection season regarding noise from audible bird scaring devices.

It was noted that a factsheet has been developed to outline the rules relating to bird scaring devices. The Compliance team has also been working with Wine Marlborough to ensure their members are advised of these rules. It was reported that following these initiatives the number of complaints received has dropped from an average of 40 complaints in 2010 to 2014, to an average of 26 complaints in 2015 to 2016 and currently to date 17 complaints in 2017.

Clrs Brooks/Hook:
That the information be received.
Carried
ATTENDANCE: Anna Eatherley, Resource Consents Manager, was present for the following item.


The report to the Committee provided information on the Proposed Schedule of Fees and Charges for activities undertaken under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act).

Members were advised that the schedule of fees has been notified and that no public hearing is required as no submissions were received. It was noted that this is the first time in 10 years that no submissions have been received.

It was reported that for one year the fees were not increased but were increased the following year at quite an increase which was not received well. Following the feedback received it was agreed that fee increases would occur on an annual basis. It was noted that an increase would be from 1 July 2017.

It was noted that the Council is committed to providing the public with a cost effective resource consent processing service that meets statutory timeframes. The fee recovery regime is to recover the reasonable costs incurred by Council in respect of this activity.

There was general discussion on the current workload within the department and in particular the workload of the duty planner. Ms Eatherley advised that this is being looked into to try a devise a process to accommodate the complex and number of inquiries being received. It was noted that it is important that the public are provided with accurate information and that the duty planner is able to provide this information in a timely and accurate manner.

Crs Brooks/Arbuckle:
1. That the report Resource Management Fees and Charges be received.
2. That the proposed Schedule of Fees be adopted with an implementation date of 1 July 2017.

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<th>Charge Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Minor Resource Consents</td>
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<td>Bore Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
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<td>Irrigation</td>
<td>Flat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notified Resource Consents</td>
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<td>All Applications (including subdivisions)</td>
<td>Base</td>
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<td>Section 127, 128</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Notified Resource Consents</td>
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<td>All Applications but excluding subdivisions</td>
<td>Base</td>
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<td>Subdivisions (Note: Engineering charges are additional)</td>
<td>Base</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Consents, Certificate and Permissons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration service for lodgement of change/cancellation of consent notice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 136, 139, 139A, 221</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Registry Compliance (Certificates, Consents)</td>
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<td>Removal of Building Line Restriction</td>
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<td>Charge Type</td>
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<td>Section 348 LGA Right of Way Applications</td>
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<td>Transfers</td>
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<td>Water, Coastal (Marine Farm)</td>
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<td>Coastal (Other), Discharge, Land Use</td>
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<td>Sections 223, 224 - Approval of deposit of survey plans</td>
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<td>4 lots or less (each stage)</td>
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<td>5 or more lots (each stage)</td>
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<td>Outline Plan Approvals, Policy Statements, Plan Changes and Requirements</td>
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<td>Section 176A Approval of Outline Plan</td>
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<td>Outline Plan Waiver</td>
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<td>Notice of Requirements or Alterations to Designations</td>
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<td>Non-Notified</td>
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<td>Notified</td>
<td>Base $5,350</td>
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<td>Statements and Miscellaneous Certificates</td>
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<td>Provide required documentation</td>
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<td>Site Inspection</td>
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<td>Disbursements, e.g. boat hire</td>
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<td>Engineering Charges - Subdivision and Land Use</td>
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<td>Engineering:</td>
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<td>Evaluation for 1-3 lots</td>
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<td>Evaluation for 4-10 lots</td>
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<td>Evaluation for 11-20 lots</td>
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<td>Evaluation for 20+ lots</td>
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<td>Engineering evaluation for each additional dwelling (Land Use Consent)</td>
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The report to the Committee sought to present Andrea Halloran and Graham Macky for inclusion on the list of Hearing Commissioners. Ms Halloran and Mr Macky’s CVs were attached to the agenda for members’ information. Mr Versteegh gave a brief overview of the candidates’ credentials and advised that both meet the accreditation requirements of section 34A of the Resource Management Act 1991. It was noted that Council is not bound to employ the services of a Commissioner once appointed. Following a request Mr Versteegh agreed to provide an updated list of the current commissioners to members.

Clrs Arbuckle/Brooks: That Ms Andrea Halloran and Mr Graham Macky be appointed to act as Hearings Commissioners as and when required and that they be advised accordingly.

Carried

R.16/17.395 Information Package

Clrs Hook/Arbuckle: That the Regulatory Department Information Package dated 27 April 2017 be received and noted.

Carried

The meeting closed at 12.38 pm.