



AVERT NEWSLETTER #34

SPRING 2012

It's been an eventful time in the Valley over the last little while and I'm not talking about the weather and whether we will get any outdoor tomatoes this year. There have been a few reminders about the need for our security, vigilance, and awareness of what's going on, following a series of burglaries and a P lab bust recently.

Welcome to our new members, Christine and Phil.

AGM and new committee members

Our 2012 AGM was held at The Barn at Wanda and Colin's on September 23. There was a good turnout of members, though fewer than the previous year owing to a clash with a couple of other events on in the region. Wanda stepped down as Secretary after three years in the job (but will stay on the committee) and the meeting expressed our thanks for her tireless efforts at keeping track of the sometimes chaotic committee meetings - such is our enthusiasm for life in the Valley. We welcome two additions to the committee. Susan Corbett has agreed to take up the role of Secretary, and Peter Deckers has rejoined the committee after a number of years' break. If you want to know what he's been busy doing, you can check it out here www.theseehere.com We are fortunate to have the knowledge and experience they bring to the committee.

The full committee for 2012/2013 is:

Karen Wallace, Chair 5266517

Pam Ritchie, Liaison 5267224

Brenda Mills, Road and alarms 5269462

Mark Robbins, Treasurer 5266517

Lawrence Corbett, Newsletter 5264046

Joe Moon, Caretaker 5269597

Joany Grima, Committee 02102340419

Susan Corbett, Secretary 5264046

Colin Green, Chainsaws 5264809

Peter Deckers, Committee 5266795

Wanda Menchi, Committee 5264809
Karina Fraser, Committee 5266562
Grant Fraser, Vehicles recovery 5266562
Matt McGhie, Search & rescue 5269449
Bruce McPhail, Webmaster 5266716

Property records update

The committee has initiated a project to update our records on the layout of members' properties, location of water sources, location of hazards etc. As you will read later Peter Walker from the Emergency Management Office recommended this as well. Brenda has delivered to you all a copy of the current records we are holding and would appreciate it if members would review this document, amend it as necessary and get it back to her. Any queries should be directed to Brenda at homeshow@xtra.co.nz

Sale of surplus equipment – tenders invited

AVERT has a mini-tanker for sale by sealed bid tender. This is surplus to requirements and is being sold as is where is. The inner tank is stainless steel and the outer skin is carbon steel. The tanker has been stored outside and is suffering from rust in a number of places on the outer skin. It is not currently WOF'd or rego'd for the road and the committee does not know if it has ever been approved for road travel. These two photos show the general appearance of the item. The first photo shows close up view of some of the rust around rear opening. The second photo shows the full view of the mini-tanker. If you want to inspect it, please contact Joe to arrange an appointment. Sealed bids are invited by December 1 at 5pm and should be submitted to Joe.

Note the yellow bars and roll of mat in photo 2 are not included.



Summer BBQ: You're invited!

It's time to think SUMMER and pencil in the date for the annual BBQ at Karapoti Park. The BBQ for this summer will be on **February 10** (rain off February 17). Kickoff/fireup is at 3pm. For this summer's event we will be inviting everyone in the Valley so that it becomes a Valley event rather than just an AVERT members' event. This will give us the opportunity to renew acquaintances with our friends in the northern end of the valley, as well as non-members in the valley. So feel free to invite your friends. Once again we will be having a fundraiser auction of a stacked trailer load of split firewood. The wood has been stored under cover for a year so should be hot to burn (PS Don't tell Bill!).

Subscription reminder

Mark (Treasurer) has sent out subscription invoices to everyone and would appreciate it if you could return your sub (\$20) by mail in the addressed envelope provided, or drop it into his letterbox, if you have not already done so. If you want to use internet banking, contact Mark.

Animals and fireworks

If you are celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, Guy Fawkes, Chinese New Year, or the visit of Charles and Camilla, and going to be setting off your stash of fireworks, then please as a matter of courtesy let your neighbours know especially if they have stock that might be prone to stress from the noise. Tragically in the last week Bluebank lost one of its emus that got spooked by fireworks and ended up with a broken neck after crashing into a fence. Sandy reports that "Two others were found wandering around the paddock, after they jumped the six foot fence to get out of their pen, something they would never do unless frightened. I've had emus for 16 years now and have had some close shaves in the past but no deaths." So forewarn your neighbours and they can take the necessary action to make sure their stock are not going to be spooked or stressed severely.

Meeting with Peter Walker

The committee recently invited Peter Walker, an adviser from Community Resilience Team at Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, to discuss his role, how the EMO worked, and to review the AVERT resources and planning. Peter explained the Community Resilience Team's role is to ensure community preparedness so we will be able to cope with a major event. After an event, the Operations Team will be swinging into action. We have to hope they have learned from the Christchurch experience and what is emerging from the Coronial enquiry at the moment. He did stress that the role of Civil Defence in the wake of a major event is only "coordination and communication", and we have to be prepared to look after ourselves for some days after a major event. This of course is the rationale for AVERT and we have to thank the foresight of those who set up AVERT in the first place. Karen has provided the following additional notes from this meeting.

The meeting was a wide ranging discussion where Peter shared ideas for AVERT to consider and resources that AVERT may access to help improve AVERT's ability to respond.

1. Peter suggested we would find laminated maps useful to have for emergencies (use a whiteboard marker to write on them etc).

Action point: Peter to explore getting us some large scale laminated maps of our area. (Our boundaries are 1198 to 1522D and the formed part of Karapoti Road.)

2. AVERT asked for ongoing access to Karapoti Park i.e. we would like to have the keys (3) for each of the gate, power and toilets to use for emergencies. Peter thought that this idea made sense for our group as we are akin to a civil defence centre.

Action Point: Peter to follow up with UHCC about getting us keys for Karapoti Park.

3. We discussed further the idea that AVERT was of the nature of a civil defence centre., Our colleagues up the valley have civil defence centre status. We discussed whether there was any benefit for AVERT. We didn't conclude but Peter agreed to think on this and advise us. We thought there may be some benefit in being on the emergency lists so that we got remembered for updates and training.

Action point : Peter to consider whether AVERT should have the status of a civil defence centre and let us know.

4. Peter explained the structure of the Regional Civil Defence organisation, now called Wellington Region Emergency Management Office. He said Upper Hutt Civil Defence has been run on their behalf by Hutt City Council for around 5 years. It is now all run by a group of 20 staff who are all employed by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC). However the group is not run by GWRC, it is run by a committee of the entire region's Mayors and there isn't really a role for the GWRC anymore.

They have three groups: community resilience, which focus on preparedness, operations that ensure all the information required in an emergency is compiled and accessible in the event of an emergency and a business development team. (Not sure what this third group do). They are not staffed to do all the responding in an emergency and will need other agencies to deliver.

They work with communities to ensure that they are ready in an emergency. Peter gave Wainuiomata as an example. They have produced a plan that will allow them to cope for a few days until help gets organised and arrives.

5. Peter thought that AVERT was in a good space. He said that that fact that we are a connected neighbourhood is really useful. He encouraged us to have a relationship with the Upper Valley ALERT group.
6. Peter advised that our nearest civil defence centre is Birchville School. In an emergency we would radio the nearest operating Civil Defence Centre (CDC) or the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) if the CDC isn't up and running yet. Peter said there will be an EOC operating in Upper Hutt. Our role would be to give information on our situation and we would get information back. There are now two radio channels, one for Upper Hutt and one for Lower Hutt.

Peter advised that we would be expected to exhaust our own resources before we asked the CDC or EOC for resources. Any resource requests would be prioritised against the other resource requests that they had. He said the recent snow experience may be a useful case study to base a potential plan on. He suggested that we need to have a core list of things organised such as what are our assets, where are they (updating the property database was a really good idea), get our radios and communications sorted and a central meeting place. After that he said you can sort things out as you go. What actually happens will depend on each individual emergency so there isn't a lot of benefit in doing too much detailed planning. He said we are like a huge neighbourhood support group so having a few checklists done would be helpful. He recommended that we look at *readinet* which is a public emergency plan database. He will get us our password and we can have a look at it to see if it is worthwhile.

Action Point: Peter took our Civil Defence radio to be updated for the new channels. [This has now been done.]

Action Point: Peter to advise our password for *readinet*.

7. We asked about the availability of training. Peter advised that they don't provide formal training but there was a volunteer course in Wellington that may be useful. He said he would get us an outline of what it covered so that we could consider if it would be helpful. Peter also offered a list of key jobs, such as first aid volunteer coordination, billeting etc that may also be useful.

Action point: Peter to provide an outline of the volunteer's course and the list of key jobs that may form a useful checklist.

8. Peter advised that the Emergency management services don't endorse amateurs (versus professional fire fighters) having and therefore using fire fighting gear. We are not therefore likely to get rural fire fighting training. If we have any questions or issues in this area Craig Cottrell is the best person for us to speak to.

Season's greetings

As this is the last newsletter for the year, the committee wishes all members the best for the festive season and Happy Holidays.