

Omaha Community Liaison Group Meeting – June 2021 Minutes

Attendance

Nathaniel Wilson	Watercare Environmental Care Manager
Emma Baker	Watercare Environmental Scientist
Daniel Leighton	Watercare Operations Controller Northern Region
Matt Richardson	Auckland Council Compliance Officer
Dean Grice	Resident
Chris Allan	OBC Inc
Dennis O Callahan	Omaha Shorebird Protection Trust
Diti Hill-Denee	Whangateau Harbour Care Group
Elise MacDonald	Whangateau Harbour Care Group
Elizabeth Foster	Whangateau Harbour Care Group
Ian MacDonald	Whangateau Harbour Care Group

Apologies

Liz Allen
Bill Tucker
Tarryn Wentzel

Introduction

Members of the group introduced themselves.

Nathaniel, Emma, and Daniel introduced themselves and explained their roles

Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 2020

Corrections of roles for Liz Allen, Dennis O Callahan and Graham Painter. Those in attendance otherwise approved the minutes as a correct record of the meeting

Plant operation and performance

Watercare tabled the data, with corrected total irrigation information, on the Omaha Wastewater Treatment Plant operation for June 2020 to May 2021. The combined irrigation was 174,598 m³.

Overall, the plant is operating well and is fully compliant. Nitrate has been historically challenging to manage, but performance has improved.

Variations in nitrate and ammoniacal nitrogen occur because of weather changes, which impact plant performance. Watercare automatically records its irrigation volumes with staff manually verifying the data each day.

Residents are encouraged to report any noticed issues from the plant or in the network.

General business

Matakana and Point Wells connections

Attendees raised concerns about the Matakana wastewater network and Omaha plant's capacity, given the growth of Point Wells and Matakana. Watercare explained that it designs its pipes and plant to handle peak flows and wet weather events. As a result, the plant has sufficient capacity to handle the current developments and discharge effluent that meets the consent requirements.

Although Watercare is not legally obligated to provide wastewater services, Auckland Council expects Watercare to service the live zones outlined in the Unitary Plan. Inadequate census data has made planning for future growth difficult, but it is rare for Watercare to decline applications for development connections where there is capacity.

The current trigger for investigating upgrades of the network, treatment and consent is the plant performance, especially after wet weather events. Watercare would consider both current and future growth in the area as part of any investigations.

Residents raised concerns over assistance to existing Point Wells residents who wish to connect to the wastewater network. The group also requests environmental monitoring data for the Whangateau data (**attached with these minutes**).

Auckland Council manages septic tank compliance and has the right to inspect. Watercare does not offer a subsidy for Point Wells residents (**confirmed after the meeting**).

Stormwater intrusion

Stormwater can enter the wastewater network through non-compliant wastewater gully traps and via illegal cross-connections. Residents can check their wastewater gully traps to ensure they are compliant or notify the Auckland Council of non-compliances.

Watercare monitors inflow at pump stations and the plant. Wastewater volumes will increase proportionally with new developments, and any inconsistencies with surcharging become something for Watercare to investigate.

Point Wells wastewater networks have some saline and groundwater intrusion, but this is yet to present a significant issue. Watercare monitors conductivity in the plant inflows. No inflow and infiltration investigations have occurred at Omaha or Point Wells (**confirmed after the meeting**).

Other business

The group discussed CLG media policy. As residents, journalists may come to these meetings as anyone else can, but any articles they intended to write would require further discussion with Watercare. Watercare is to invite Jannette Thompson of Mahurangi Matters to future meetings.

Auckland Council now directly maintains the cycleway that runs along the forestry block.

The current consent does not require Watercare to remove the trees on the Jones Rd block. Removal of the trees would compromise the performance of the Omaha Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Watercare would have to replace the irrigation lines unnecessarily. Anyone's concerns about the safety of the airstrip should go to the Civil Aviation Authority.

Those in attendance were satisfied with Watercare's current level of communication.

Proposed next meeting: 21 July 2021