



NEWSLETTER April 2020

Kāpiti - Mana Forest & Bird

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy. Desiderata Author unknown

Editor: Russell Bell, Email russelljamesbell@gmail.com. Phone 0212266047. Your feedback on this newsletter would be most welcome as would contributions to future newsletters.

March meeting and AGM

Speaker

Our March meeting was cancelled because of Covid-19. We decided early.

The speaker was to be Matu Booth of Ngā Manu. telling us of the exciting changes that are happening in Nga Manu and its contribution to the biodiversity of Kāpiti and the Wellington region.

We will let you know when we are to resume meetings.

AGM

That meeting was also to be our AGM. F&B has decided that the AGMs of branches should be put off for some months (so you're stuck with us in the meantime).

Secretary and committee

We still need these positions filled and for a while they will through electronic means. If you can please talk to me 0212266047

Contents

Chairmans Opinion Piece - Covid 19 Climate
Something I hope you will enjoy

Time to reflect
Branch contacts

Chair's Opinion Piece

Firstly, my sympathies for all those affected by Covid-19. While illness from the virus is relatively uncommon in NZ, many livelihoods are affected and some of our friends and family are living where the risk of contagion is higher and the financial future more precarious.

We know some things that will affect us badly yet we don't do enough to avert them.

It has been known for years that viruses like Covid-19 will occur. We have had them before e.g. SARS 2002. The frequency of them has increased. Many viruses come from locations where different animal species and people are forced into close proximity. This happens in live markets and some evidence says that it happens when we degrade natural, species-rich communities with roading, mining, timber extraction and urbanisation. Animals become concentrated and viruses jump species. Some jump to humans. As we make inroads into more of the natural world, more viruses will jump to us. They will have different infection rates, different symptom delays and different death rates. Ebola for instance has a short symptom delay and a death rate of about 90%.

Some animal viruses will jump to us in any case. It is the rate in the last few decades that is worrying.

For more on this, see <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/18/tip-of-the-iceberg-is-our-destruction-of-nature-responsible-for-covid-19-aoe>

What could we do about it?

Some scientists are calling for reservation of 30% of the natural world. This could include most of the areas that remain rich in biodiversity. We would have to accept limits to the amount of land we dominate and limit the degradation we inflict on the natural world.

In a TED talk (March 2015), Bill Gates said *The next serious event to affect the peoples of earth is not nuclear but a virus and we are not prepared for it.* How right he was. We could also plan to deal with a pandemic when it comes. It was good to see NZ had a pandemic plan that it could follow.

Climate change is another event that we know is happening and getting worse and we know

that we are the cause. It has already caused a greater loss of life and greater suffering, but New Zealand with its first world infrastructure and its location has largely been spared.

But all around the world we hear of its influence - fires, floods, droughts, hurricanes and cyclones, all worse with climate change, causing famines, migrations and all the tragedies that follow. Each climate change event also wipes out much of the biodiversity in the event location. (Note the billion or so animals and myriad plants killed by the Australian fires) We are currently headed for climate change much worse than 1.5 degrees and if not prevented, that will affect us here too.

What can we do about it?

In NZ, the government and councils could;

- Plant 1.5 billion trees
- Stop the production of beef and dairy
- Change the transport system to electric.
- Move to regenerative agriculture.
- Reduce travel by plane.

Below is a link to an interview with Dr Paul Winton (a Kiwi) who talks about NZ's solution to climate change. It is somewhat optimistic, more practical than most, talks about where NZ is at, what the likely future of some of our companies is, investments and our transport sector. Worth a listen (45 minutes).

<https://www.podcasts.nz/4-vehicles-are-the-low-hanging-fruit-dr-paul-winton/>

But what can we personally do about it?

Vote with your vote: Forest and Bird are politically active, seeking to increase the "green" initiatives in all parties but the public need show they want that too, so communication with which ever party you support is critical to F&B's aims and of course, who you actually vote for is important.

Another vote to influence the world on almost any environmental (and humanity) issue is joining an online petition platform like Avaaz. <https://www.avaaz.org> Its free and influential because of its huge size.

Vote with your savings: Consider the two articles in the F&B magazine on investing Mindful Money <https://mindfulmoney.nz> and CareSaver KiwiSaver <https://caresaver.co.nz> p56.

This may help you to use your savings to support activities you agree with, and help starve those activities you don't.

Vote with your spending: The economies and products that we spend on receive support to keep producing. Electric and PHEV cars and E bikes are examples. Sales have forced many manufacturers to move electric.

Then there are the more day to day activities - planting trees, moving towards a plant based diet, composting, using public transport, using lower energy forms of transport (bikes) and to calculate how well you are doing there is an online carbon footprint calculator <https://www.carbonneutraltrust.org.nz>

The loss of biodiversity, the pollution of our rivers and streams, the over exploitation of our seas and soils are the same sort of problem as Covid-19 and climate change. We are causing them. We know how to fix them but will we take appropriate action in time?
In NZ, it appears that 4 weeks in isolation allow us to get the spread Covid-19 under

control. To deal with the our other environmental emerging emergencies will have a lead time in years.

I hope that, in taking the remarkable steps many governments have taken around the world to arrest Covid-19, they will recognise that maintaining the status quo and sleepwalking to a climate change disaster is not the only option, that it does not pay to ignore known, scientifically backed, serious problems that will become urgent and possibly catastrophic in their own good time.

I think the large issues we need to deal with can be summed up in the following three topics.

- Climate change
- Biodiversity loss
- Environmental degradation.

I hope that governments will take action to reduce and rid the world of those problems.

Russell

Something to enjoy

This is best if you are able to hook you device into your television. It has vision and sound.
<http://volkerpannes.de/portfolio/bird-song-opera/>

Time to reflect

I think this is a time for reflection - on what our lives are, what they could be, on the planet, on our children's future and on the toll we put on the other species we share the earth with. Some aspects of this time may be better than before - More time with family, not so hectic, spent less money. There may be rewarding activities - I have sorted out... the joy of gardening, more exercise, that book I have wanted to read. With a little more freedom, we may be able to go a bit further to some local beautiful spots and in the future to plan a slow trip through New Zealand's great places. It is a very beautiful country after all and it will not have many tourists for some time.

If we don't look at what we have lost, but look to what we can take from this experience into the future, that may help us not only get through but live more fulfilling lives and prepare for our personal futures.

Branch Committee Contacts

Chair: Russell Bell Phone: Mobile 021 2266047 Email: russelljbell@gmail.com

Secretary: Irene Thomas Phone: 04 293 6490
Mobile: 021 1802545 Email: thomasi@xtra.co.nz

Sue Boyde Phone: 0211198085 Email: sm.boyde@gmail.com

Treasurer: Peter Kentish. Telephone 04 298 1265 Email PK2003_595@hotmail.com

Pene Burton Bell. Telephone 021 1592409

Tony Ward. Telephone 04 293 7203 Email kotareg@exta.co.nz