



# VILLAGE NEWS

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 1

GRENADA VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

JULY 2020

## COVID-19

The Coronavirus has certainly transformed all our lives and unfortunately we may have to live in an environment of Covid-19 for some time yet. One stark reality is becoming increasingly clear and that is, globally it is not going away anytime soon with a million additional cases now being confirmed each week.

The last few months presented us all with challenges particularly on our personal and collective security. Many people have been living with an underlying level of anxiety and emotional strain since mid March. There has also been phenomenal pressure on some through redundancies and business closures and we all need to remember this.

This fall-out from the pandemic was, and still is, something most of us have not experienced before. It has been a milestone in our history we shall never forget. Things may be getting closer to normal for many of us, but we must never forget that for some, the hardship will be continuing.

## COMMUNITY HALL

Under Covid-19, the community hall and tennis courts were closed during Alert Level 4. Now that we have moved to Alert Level 1, the hall has re-opened but to ensure that all attendees are safe, we are required to have some special procedures regarding enhanced hygiene and cleaning protocols in place. Copies of the additional requirements will be provided to the hirer by the Association at the time of booking the hall. A contact-tracing register needs to be completed for all persons entering the hall and this form will be provided by us. The information collected will be retained confidentially by the Grenada Village Community Association until we are advised that it is no longer needed, at which time it will be destroyed.

These additional Conditions of Hire are in place for your health, safety and wellbeing and will remain effective until we receive notification from the Wellington City Council that they no longer need to apply.

## GRENADA VILLAGE VOTING BOOTH

Election Day is Saturday 19 September 2020 and the community hall at 4 Mandeville Crescent will once again be a voting place on the day.

The Ohariu Electorate is looking for good people to staff the voting booth during the day and there are also opportunities to work before and after Election Day. These are paid roles and full training is given. See [elections.nz/jobs](https://elections.nz/jobs) for more details.

## NEW TREASURER

Our previous Treasurer has moved from Grenada Village and the Association is now seeking a new Treasurer. A basic knowledge of accountancy and financial systems is required. If you are able help us fill this important position, please contact Bruce Patterson, Tel: 478 4221 or Mob: 0275 234 221.

We really do need someone to come forward and volunteer to do this necessary role.

## NEW DEVELOPMENT – GRENADA DRIVE

In our October 2019 newsletter, we advised that a Resource Consent application had been lodged with the Wellington City Council to create a commercial subdivision of three allotments, one balance lot, and one road at 11 Grenada Drive. This is the flat plateau of land on the western side of Grenada Drive heading up from the motorway interchange. Access to the site would be via a single cul-de-sac road off Grenada Drive. This road provides access to all three allotments and has been named Carmel Terrace.

Lot Nos. 2 and 3 are now to be developed by NZ Post to establish and operate a state-of-the-art 'super' courier sorting and processing hub/facility that will cost \$170 million and is expected to open in 2022. It will process parcels faster and more efficiently with the processing capacity increasing from 95 million parcels as current to 190 million parcels. It will involve the construction of a 10.690m<sup>2</sup> rectangular building within a 2.42ha area on the site. There will be a hard-surfaced yard area to the north-east of the building for the loading and unloading of goods from delivery trucks as well as driver changes. This will have a large canopy

cover extending off the building to provide shelter from the elements. A total of 47 car parks will be provided. The entire area will be fenced off for security purposes and some lighting is proposed to illuminate the building for identification and security.

The warehouse will potentially operate 24 hours a day. However the majority of activity will occur between 6am-6pm. It is expected there will be up to 80 full-time staff working within the building over three shifts throughout the day and a maximum of 43 staff on any one shift. Courier and delivery drivers will also be present.

It is expected that approximately 50 truck movements and 60 courier vans will arrive and depart from the site each day. Staff vehicles arriving and departing will be additional to this. There will be no sales direct to the public of any goods or services from the site.

The site will be landscaped with low-level planting, shrubs and specimen trees to soften the development. Only low-levels of signage are proposed as the building will not be open to the general public. The materials chosen for the building will create an attractive and visually appealing design.



## BITS AND PIECES

We have been in discussion with Transit Group regarding the unkempt and poor state of the land above the bus depot bounded by Grenada Drive and Mark Avenue near the roundabout. As a condition of the resource consent, this area is to be landscaped with a mix of native plants at the completion of the overall site but due to the lengthy delays that have been incurred with the construction, Transit have agreed to clear the land and begin some planting now.

Back in March, Mark Avenue had to be patched with further roading stones as it was beginning to break-up in many sections. This road was laid in chip-seal at the end of February last year and between then and March this year has had to have remedial work completed on it on four separate occasions. We have met with the Council Roding Engineers about this. Helston Road in Paparangi was also laid in chip-seal and now all the corner sections have

needed to be re-laid back in asphalt. Grenada Drive, from the interchange to the roundabout has been programmed for chip-sealing soon.

For some time we, and a number of residents, have been concerned at the gorse growing into the trees planted at the top of Grenada Drive on the left side heading down the hill from the roundabout to the interchange. We have had an on-site meeting with the Council but they refused to get rid of the gorse however they did have the trees trimmed back off the footpath. We will try again as the gorse is choking the trees. We also pointed out that the kerbside on the left downhill side was heavily overgrown and this was remedied.

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, we were unable to publish our April newsletter. Also our Neighbours Day Picnic that we were planning to hold on Sunday 19 April was cancelled for this year

## NEWLANDS VOLUNTEER FIRE STATION

Due to the Wellington City Council proposing to upgrade Newlands Park, the land at 214 Newlands Road (at which the Newlands Volunteer Fire Station is currently sited) will be required by the Council as part of that upgrade. As a result, it is necessary for the Newlands Fire Station to be relocated to another site which is yet to be determined.

As this subject is of great importance to the Grenada Village community, the reality of the situation and the background behind it needs to be known.

The Newlands Volunteer Fire Station is this area's front-line emergency response service and it is essential that it remains in the eastern section of northern Wellington (which covers Newlands, Woodridge, Paparangi and Grenada Village). This rapidly growing area with a current population of approximately 16,000 people is expected to substantially increase within the next five years.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) have had a long-established and well-known determination to get rid of a volunteer station in Newlands and to centralise the operation to Johnsonville. This is a repeat of the scenario that took place in 1993/1994 and again in 2001/2003.

In 2001/2002 there was immense public pressure against the proposal by the NZ Fire Service (as it was called then) to close the Newlands Fire Station. The decision was not sound and had to be challenged. A small group had been acting on behalf of the various communities since the 2001 and in 2003 they made direct representation to the Government (Prime Minister Helen Clark and the Minister of Internal Affairs, George Hawkins). After examining all the facts and conducting their own investigation, the Government instructed the NZ Fire Service to reverse their decision and the station remained. The Government considered that should the Newlands Fire Station be closed, the impact and repercussions on the involved communities would be unacceptable and excessively detrimental to them. In 2004 a Parliamentary Select Committee hearing was convened with the outcome supporting the decision to retain the Newlands Fire Station. This vindicated the decision. What has changed?

Other than the fact that the Newlands coverage area has substantially grown in size over the last 19 years, and along with it the subsequent increase in population, what is different now that invalidates the previous controversy to retain the Newlands Volunteer Fire Brigade in the Newlands area? The rationale and justification back in 2001/2003 remains the same – but now, 19 years later, even more so than then.

On 20 September 2019, we lodged an Official Information Act Request on FENZ to gain further information. On 10 December 2019 (57 working days after the OIA Request was lodged) we eventually received 389 pages of documents. They contained some startling information.

The proposal to upgrade Newlands Park is not new. In early 2009 the Council advised the NZ Fire Service of its plans to create a 'Newlands Centre Plan' that would shape the future of Newlands Centre and provide a long-term vision for the area. This plan was finalised and adopted in April 2010. Included in the Plan, the land where the Newlands Fire Station is sited was to become part of the proposed playground. Funding for the development was to be allocated in the 2018/2019 financial year.

For 11 years FENZ have been fully aware that the fire station would need to be relocated but have done nothing about

it. They have actually known that a different site would be required since 2003. At that time, they stated that by 2006 the station would be removed to a different site but would still remain within the current coverage area on the eastern side of the motorway. Land would be purchased even if it was not to be physically required for a number of years. This did not occur even though several suitable sites were available (at pre 2006 price levels).

In 2015, the New Zealand Fire Service officially confirmed to the Council that the Newlands Fire Station was not required for operational reasons and that the area would be covered by Johnsonville. The station would not close however, but remain on a 'hold and maintain basis' until the park redevelopment was started in 2019/2020.

On 10 December 2019, FENZ released their first media statement stating among a few other things, that they would be consulting only with the United Fire Brigades Association, the Newlands Volunteer Fire Brigade, the Johnsonville Fire Brigade, and the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union on the future of the Newlands Fire Station. The community, who are major stakeholders in this issue, were side-lined and completely left out of the consultation process. Such an important community issue was not open to the ones it directly involved.



We prepared a formal submission to FENZ to ensure the affected communities in the Newlands Fire Area were represented and had input into the decision-making process. As it was to cover the whole area, we noted in the submission that while it was compiled by the Grenada Village Community Association Incorporated, it was being 'presented in partnership with the Newlands Paparangi Progressive Association'. We did this after discussion with the NPPA and they were most pleased we took this view. **Our submission can be read on the Grenada Village website ([grenadavillage.org.nz](http://grenadavillage.org.nz)).** The link is on the front page under 'News'. Unless you had access to the information provided by the OIA Request, some of this may not ever have been revealed.

Documented in their internal memorandums, Fire and Emergency New Zealand have clearly stated that they want to close the Newlands Fire Station and relocate the Newlands Volunteer Fire Brigade to operate out of the Johnsonville Fire Station. Should this relocation to Johnsonville occur, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, stated in their own internal correspondence provided in the OIA, that they 'do expect the Newlands Volunteer Fire Brigade would soon disband and be disestablished'

With the travel distances for the Newlands volunteers to go to Johnsonville, it is unlikely they would be able to make the appliance in time to attend incidents. It would take the Newlands volunteers six to seven minutes for them to arrive at Johnsonville station from their homes or their place of work in Newlands after their pager alarms were activated. They then have to gear up, and respond all the way back to the

Newlands area. This could result in a 15-17 minute delay (or more), which could be life-threatening as well as being outside the national requirements that regulate response times for volunteer fire stations.

It is also expected that morale would drop in the Newlands Brigade and they would lose members. If this happened and they did not have the required complement, they would lose the fire truck.

If the Newlands Volunteer Fire Brigade disestablishes, it will represent a major decrease in the firefighting capability for northern Wellington which is more than 50,000 people. At present there are three fire appliances for this area – one full time paid firefighter crew based in Johnsonville, one volunteer crew based in Johnsonville **that is only available in the evenings and weekends** (due to crew work commitments), and the Newlands volunteers which are on call 24 hours a day. Take Newlands away and that represents a major decline in the emergency services provided to northern Wellington. Unless of course FENZ appointed an additional full time **paid** firefighter crew into Johnsonville (at a huge cost) as the required second 24 hour appliance. Two appliances must attend all structure fires and most other incidents. It also needs to be pointed out that FENZ has stated that should Newlands be relocated to Johnsonville station, modifications to the building would be needed to accommodate the crew and their appliance at a cost of approximately \$1m.



There is a substantial geographical divide between the Johnsonville area in the west and the Newlands area in the east with the northern motorway bisecting them into two divisions. This is of significant importance to this issue. There are only two direct routes of travel between these areas and both of these access points have been identified as being in danger of being impassable after a major natural disaster. The route via Newlands Rd is 'Red Zoned' on the official

Hazard Maps and the route via Helston Rd traverses two bridges which could be blocked or even collapsed. A further possible access may be by travelling along the motorway (that could be damaged) and up Grenada Drive but that would then require travelling through the 'Mark Avenue dip' between Grenada Village and Paparangi, which is a filled embankment that was constructed in the early 1950's as part of the northern motorway. In a natural disaster situation, particularly if it was reasonably severe, all access routes could be closed at any, or the same time.

During the past five year period (2014/15 to 2018/19) the Newlands Volunteer Fire Brigade attended 813 call-outs covering a multitude of incidents. Approximately 6,500 hours of training was completed on Monday nights plus many extra training days, first-aid courses or specialised training courses. The current complement of the Newlands Volunteer Fire Brigade, have more than 300 years of cumulative service between them – an extraordinary display of dedication and commitment to serve the community.

Fire and Emergency Zealand is a community-based organisation that is publicly funded primarily by a levy paid on all insurance policies that cover residential buildings, domestic contents, motor vehicles, commercial buildings and marine cargo. FENZ's primary funding sources during the 2020/2021 year are anticipated to be \$624 million. A new permanent Fire Station in Newlands would cost less than \$3 million and would exist for 40/50 years.. Volunteer fire stations are a particularly cheap way for Fire and Emergency New Zealand to meet their responsibilities. Annual operating/running costs for the Newlands Volunteer Fire Station are only \$50,000/\$60,000 per year. Volunteer firefighters save the public purse close to \$700 million per year in wages alone. As of May 2019, Fire and Emergency New Zealand consisted of 11,713 volunteer fire fighters, 1,694 career fire fighters and 1,456 in management/support.

The Newlands Volunteer Fire Station must remain a fully operational urban volunteer fire station that continues to serve and protect the surrounding communities as it was formed in 1958, to do so. Until a new purpose-built station is constructed in the existing Newlands coverage area, a temporary location must be established. There are a few sites available to do this. Instead of FENZ trying to relocate the Newlands Fire Brigade to the Johnsonville Station, which will ultimately disestablish them, FENZ should be supporting them and reinforcing the need for them to continue serving the overall public interest.

We appreciate that this article is rather long, but had we not lodged the OIA Request, none of the information we obtained (and there is more than we have been able to include here) would have been made public.

## HALL HIRE

The Community Hall is available for hire for various social activities.

Charges levied by the Association are \$12.00 per hour for financial members and \$20.00 per hour to non financial members.

No adult private parties are allowed due to the close proximity of houses, unless agreed under specific arrangements..

For more information contact

Dawn Patterson

**Telephone 478 4221**

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2019/2020

Bruce Patterson (Chairman)	478 4221
Paul Emley (Secretary)	478 7044
Dawn Patterson	478 4221
William Nobelen	478 1091
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