

### VALLEY VOICE TE REO HAPORI O WAIMAPIHI NEWS AND VIEWS FROM AROUND THE ARO VALLEY **AUGUST 2014**

### **New AVCC committee elected**



A 'quite unique' Aro Valley annual general meeting in July saw a new committee elected without the controversy that characterised last year's equivalent. Unusually, there were exactly the right number of nominees for the places available, meaning no election was needed.

Incumbent co-chair Roland Sapsford stayed on for another year, joined as cochair by AVCC committee member and Kai o te Aro organiser Charles Barrie.

Rachel Griffiths was appointed the new treasurer, while Sarah-Jane Parton stayed on as secretary. The new committee of ten people elected was: Rochelle Walker,

### olar panels are go



Oliver ter Ellen and Miranda Voke of AroSolar. and the new solar panels. Photo: Justine Hall

(L-R): Julia Stace Brooke-White, Charles Barrie, Sarah-Jane Parton, Lisa Thompson, Luke Allen, Rachel Griffiths, Jay Buzenberg, Rochelle Walker, Roland Sapsford, Jadwyn Lowe, Bridget Stocker, Cindy Jennett, Mattie Timmer, Madeleine Rashbrooke (Photo: Des Culling)

Lisa Thompson, Luke Allen, Julia Stace, Jadwyn Lowe, Madeleine Rashbrooke, Cindy Jennett, former co-chair Bridget Stocker, former treasurer Mattie Timmer, and Jay Buzenberg.

#### MORE NEWS FROM THE AGM PAGE 3

Solar panels have now been installed on the roof of the community centre. following a successful fundraising campaign led by three renewable energy enthusiasts as part of Wellington City Council's Smart Energy Challenge and supported by GenerationZero, a youth climate activist group.

Speaking at the Valley's AGM in July, Oliver ter Ellen from 'AroSolar' said the solar panels would be accompanied by a display showing how much energy they were generating. The community council and AroSolar members are hoping to frame the display facing out of a side window of the community centre, so passers-by can easily see how much

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VALLEYAUGUST 2014General Election<br/>Candidates line<br/>up for water<br/>blastingWellington Central<br/>candidates will have to brave<br/>the infamous Aro Valley<br/>water pistol on Monday 8th<br/>September at 7.30pm in the<br/>community centre.This year's iteration of the<br/>legendary Aro Valley 'Meet the<br/>Candidates' meeting will give<br/>locals a chance to quiz those<br/>hoping to represent the area<br/>in Parliament (and boost their<br/>party vote). Candidates who run<br/>overtime in their speaking slot will<br/>get doused with a water pistol, as

get doused with a water pistol, as per tradition. Candidates for Wellington Central include sitting MP Grant Robertson, National list MP Paul Foster-Bell and local James Shaw for the Greens.

Aro Hall, Mon 8 Sept 7.30pm



energy is produced each day.

Overall, they were delighted with the success of the project, and were looking "to take it to other places", he said. "It has been a pilot project, a test case to see if this project structure can work... It has been a big success." The group intend to hold a party in the community centre on the 31st August to celebrate the close of the project.

The solar panels are expected to save \$450 approximately in power bills per year, with savings agreed to be passed on to the preschool next door.



### Open seed cones in May, from which ripe seed fell into my palm Significant Trees at the Aro Street bus terminus – part 2: Kawaka – Libocedrus plumosa Story and photo by Julia Stace

Kawaka occurs naturally in lowland forests in the northern North Island and south to the Bay of Plenty region. It reappears in the northwest corner of the South Island.

2

The lonely kawaka on the slope above The Orchard community garden at the top of Aro St is the last survivor of several kawaka planted along the edge of the

entrance to Polhill Gully. The others didn't thrive and were replaced by a row of puriri (a species not actually local to Wellington) and kowhai there today. This one survivor does produce seed but, being so far from its usual habitat, is very unlikely to have any seedlings that

Libocedrus

will survive in Polhill Reserve. At the recent planting day on June 7 many volunteers planted low growing species like flaxes and divaricating shrubs, on the slope around it and the other large tree already growing there, the dawn redwood.

This narrow, upright conifer grows slowly to 12m with a spread of c. 2.5m. It has tiny bright green scale-like leaves on flattened fern-like branches. Looking



three species in New Caledonia and two in New Zealand, an odd, but not uncommon, connection of the flora of these two now-distant countries.

Its wind pollinated seeds are formed in cones, whose four thin, dry and woody scales, each with a distinctively sharp spine, are closely grouped on a central stem. The winged seeds form on the scales and eventually sift out between them. As well as these seed cones, kawaka have smaller yellow pollen cones on the same trees.

You can see more kawaka in the Botanical Gardens and Otari Wilton's bush.

### Water slides in the street help forge 'playable' city

Two locals are heading to a conference in Bristol where a giant water slide through one of the city's main streets will be a hot topic.

Community Centre coordinator Kelvin Aris and artist Stephen Templer are looking for crowd funding to attend the 'Playable City' conference in September this year.

Their promo material for the event says: "From Stockholm's Piano Staircase to Bogota's traffic mimes, a global movement of unusual city interventions is taking shape, using playfulness to connect people to each other and the places they live and work."

One of the best-known 'playable' innovations was a 90 metre water slide installed on Bristol's Park Street, which members of the public slid down on lilos in front of a huge crowd.

The conference will look at questions such as, "what role do city authorities have in creating playful, permeable cities? How do they enable the conditions and mechanisms for creative citizens and interventions to flourish?" But it will also ask, "Does the notion of a Playable City suggest organised fun too strongly?"

Aris and Templer, who have already upped the playful ante with projects like the Sausage Circus Bike sound-system, hope to make Wellington even more playable. "What makes us come alive is having fun out in public places – creating spectacle and getting people involved," they say.

"We want to take you with us on a playful adventure to re-imagine and reconfigure the streets, places and stories of our fantastic city."

#### AUGUST 2014

### No vote at AGM as new AVCC committee elected

(continued from page 1)

The calm proceedings of this year's AGM were a stark contrast to last year's, which was marred by wild insinuations from the floor and dragged on for hours after a secret ballot for the elections was requested.

This year, two nominations received on the night were ruled out of order before the meeting, and no nominations were taken from the floor. There was no vote.

#### **Co-chair explains**

"The AVCC's practice for many years has been that if the same number of nominations are received by the closing date as positions exists then nominations are not called for from the floor," re-elected co-chair Roland Sapsford explains.

"I checked this with the meeting on the night and then took a confirmatory vote. This was because the situation of exactly the same number of nominees as positions was so unusual.

"Two nominations were received just before the meeting and these were ruled out of order as they were received after the closing date."

### LETTERS New trees defended

#### Dear community,

With all respect to David McGill (re his letter in the July 2014 Valley Voice) and others who may share his concern about the growth of the trees newly planted in Aro Park, we think it is overstated for the following reasons.

The growth reach he speaks of are for forest trees. Specimen trees typically grow more slowly. Besides, for tall broadleaved trees, we're talking 100+ years before they reach their full potential.

For these reasons, growth to the point where shading becomes an issue (after they clear the effect of existing multi-storey housing, trees on private property and the rising slope in the north-west corner) will happen well after David's and our remains return to our recycled and recycling Earth. Finally, if a problem does arise and is confirmed by city council tree experts, these trees can be trimmed. "At that time, I had no idea about the number of nominees we had. This was purely about the timing, Had there been vacancies, these people could have been nominated from the floor," he said.

#### Hall and holiday programme

In other news at the AGM, Sapsford said the Valley needed to "restart" the conversation with the city council about the planned upgrade of the hall, which had been in the works for over 10 years

Community centre coordinator Kelvin Aris said the school holiday programme, which had looked like it might close, could get a reprieve. Numbers previously had been low, "but this time, we had really good numbers. I don't know what exactly to put that down to. But it's given me a little bit of hope that it's something we should keep investing energy into." The programme will keep running at least until the end of the year, and will be reassessed

Aris will be taking "a few months off" later this year to attend a conference in Bristol (see story on page 2) and travel in South America. A temporary replacement will be sought.

#### Graffiti black out questioned

Asked about the decision to black out the mural by the tennis courts, Aris said it had happened as part of the city council's new "zero tolerance" graffiti policy, following extensive tagging over the mural. "It was too far gone to be saved." Sapsford stressed that it had not happened "at the request of the committee". He acknowledged concerns about the blacking out, and said there might be a general meeting to discuss the issue

Lisa Thompson tabled a discussion paper about the Valley's constitution and

Parks have many purposes. They're an amalgam of users' needs. Plus we're talking here of a dynamic process: like us, trees are going to come and go. That huge gum commemorating the valley inhabitants taking charge of the park won't last forever; indeed, it stands to go before the new arrivals make any significant growth (especially, as gums typically do, when limbs start falling on the footpath, road and park – one reason camping under them is discouraged, in Australia). A cycle of emergent flora is the result.

We've now got a tawa, a hinau and a northern rata back in the valley centre – three examples that will provide much longer seasonal nourishment than kowhai for bird-life, and remind us of what preceded our brief occupation. Yes, at some point in years to come shading may be an issue, but the benefits we immediately gain from the new arrivals surely mean it's an issue we can comfortably live with.

Denis Asher, Julia Stace and Jean-Claude Stahl what needed to happen with it. The paper covered two main issues: clearing up some ambiguities, and addressing clauses that would be soon made outdated by recent law changes. The paper would be made available to anybody who wanted a copy, she said.

#### Finances and sustainability

The AVCC made a \$17,000 profit in the last financial year, taking its total reserves to \$78,000, outgoing treasurer Mattie Timmer said. Funding from Wellington City Council was guaranteed for three years, providing "a solid income stream", he added. In general income was down, from \$178,000 to \$144,000, "maybe reflecting the funding landscape... it's harder to get funding". However, spending was down by an equivalent amount, leading to the \$17,000 profit, roughly the same as the previous year.

Also at the AGM, new co-chair Charles Barrie said local gardening group Kai o te Aro was working with other groups on plans for trialling "an urban market garden project" on the Steps site on Aro Street. This was part of plans for turning the valley into "a showcase inner-city sustainable suburb".

Community centre coordinator Kelvin Aris said the neighbourhood composting scheme for Epuni Street was going well. They would be trialling collection from 20-25 households, "and watching it like a hawk for four months to see what happens".

"We want to close the loop, so that not a single gram of biomass leaves Epuni street... eventually we will be composting human waste, but that's another stage!" The compost bins would hopefully be in a landscaped area "where you can have conversations with your neighbours over a bucket of compost".

### Co-chairs look to the future

A range of challenges, including the deterioration of the bunker and the future of the school holiday programme, face the incoming AVCC committee.

In their co-chairs report to the AGM, Roland Sapsford and Bridget Stocker said "key opportunities" for the year ahead included:

- addressing the deterioration of the bunker behind the main hall
- expanding the AVCC's role as an umbrella organisation and support body for initiatives in the Valley
- determining whether the community still needed a school holiday programme run at the community centre
- looking at ways in which to support sustainability in the Valley
- engaging with the city council over a possible upgrade of the community centre
- concluding the review of the AVCC constitution
- engaging with a trial of Loomio for the Valley and the ideas that come out of this
- working with the city council to improve the quality of decision-making around resource consents

### NZTA closes door on community building

#### At the end of July, Stillwaters Community closed its doors at 327 Willis Street and relocated its community activities down the road to the Undercroft at St Peter's Church.

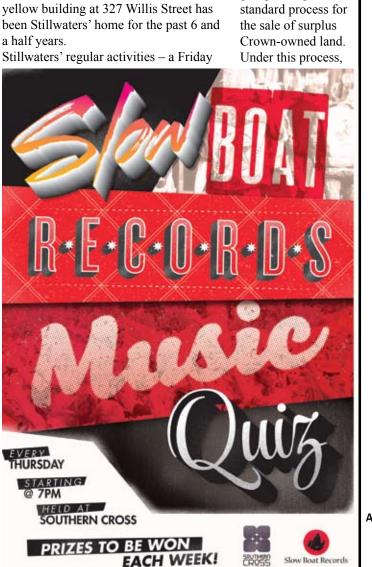
With roading work completed, the New Zealand Transport Agency(NZTA) is now preparing to sell off its stock of properties deemed surplus to requirement. 327 Willis Street falls in this category. Stillwaters was required to vacate the premises so that work can be undertaken on the building before it goes up for public tender.

Stillwaters is a Christian community group that provides hospitality, friendship, practical support and an opportunity for people to create caring community together. Stillwaters has been running for over 20 years in various forms, starting as a drop-in centre on Cuba Street in the early 1990s. The big vellow building at 327 Willis Street has been Stillwaters' home for the past 6 and a half years.

night shared community meal and a Sunday evening community church service - will continue at the Undercroft at St Peter's Church, a venue that has a long history with social justice in the inner city. In the meantime Stillwaters will continue to look for a longer term home that combines residential and community space.

Like many houses along the Karo Drive bypass route, 327 Willis Street was acquired in the 1960s under the Public Works Act in anticipation of roading development in the area. The controversial inner city bypass was completed in 2007 and more recently work was undertaken to widen sections of Willis and Victoria Streets. Now that this work is finished, the properties are

going through the standard process for the sale of surplus Crown-owned land. Under this process,





properties are offered to former owners, when they can be located, and then if former owners elect not to purchase, properties will be considered by the Crown for settling Treaty of Waitangi claims. Land not acquired by former owners or by iwi can then be offered for sale to the general public on the open market.

Members of Stillwaters Community remain hopeful that they will be able to return to 327 Willis Street or to other suitable premises in the area.

### Aro Valley Community **Pre-school**

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Email: arovalley@clear.net.nz

Website: arovalleypreschool.blogspot.co.nz Also a community playgroup for under 3 year olds, operates on Tuesday afternoons from 3.30 to 5.00 pm. Contact Sacha Green for details at: whanaukakariki@gmail.com

### **Online democracy pilot for Valley**

#### The Aro Valley has put itself on the cutting edge of democracy through its recent choice to trial online decision-making software Loomio.

At a general meeting in July, residents decided to trial the software for the AVCC committee and local groups such as Kai o te Aro, but in the hope that it could eventually be extended to the wider community.

Loomio, which is being built by Wellington's Enspiral collective, is an innovative piece of decision-making software already being used around the world, even though it is still in development.

It allows users to set up a group and have discussions on a two-panel screen. On the left-hand panel, users post comments, as they would on standard sites. But on the right-hand panel, they can put forward propositions to guide the discussion towards a decision, and register reasons for voting for or against the proposition.

Loomio, which was sparked by the Occupy movement, is designed to supplement not replace face-to-face meetings. Speaking at the meeting, Loomio's Richard Bartlett said it was intended to "make it easy for people to participate in decisions that affect them".

To help residents without Internet access, it was possible that terminals could be installed in the community centre. More generally, if Loomio was used amongst the wider community, it would probably be just "one strand" of discussion and would feed into other face-to-face discussions.

Asked about how the discussion groups would be run, Loomio's Ben Knight said they had "very strong" moderation functions. A group's moderator could remove people who were being disruptive.

If it were used widely within the Valley, it would be the first time that Loomio had been used "on a whole of community level", Knight said. "We haven't gone there yet. We're really excited to try," Bartlett added.

Asked by AVCC secretary Sarah-Jane Parton about the amount of work required to run discussions on Loomio, Bartlett acknowledged it could be significant. But he added: "We are saying, let's run an experiment, and ask, does it add value? If it does, then how do we resource it? [But] it's unlikely to balloon it out into a huge amount of work."

AVCC co-chair Roland Sapsford said Loomio would set up an Aro Valley group, "seed that with basic support, and enable people to set up [sub] groups". If the trials were successful, there would need to be a detailed conversation about how to take the next steps.

Asked about the likely costs, Bartlett said Loomio's developers needed to be "selfsustaining" and eventually bring in some revenue, which could include "a small amount of time" helping the Valley get the most out of the software, if it wanted to continue using it.

For the moment, however, there was "no expectation, there's no contracts being signed". Co-chair Charles Barrie added that there would have to be "a formal proposal" before any money was spent in that way.

### New yoga teacher has taught gangs and triathletes

Valley resident Maggie Kelly is behind the new yoga classes starting Saturday morning at the community centre.

Maggie, who has been a proud home owner in the Valley for over a year, says she got into yoga "about ten years ago because I enjoyed the flexibility side of things. It was a great compliment to the endurance training I was doing."

Since then she has taught yoga to triathletes and a "yin yoga" style class at a spa for women. "The great thing about yoga is you can take it with you wherever you go," Maggie says.

"I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in rural Guatemala, where I taught yoga to my women's basketball team, different school groups of teenagers, and young kids. After a lot of "informal" yoga teaching experience I decided to do a Hatha yoga teacher training

021 912 238 | 8311 488

course in Dharamsala, India.

"Now I am settled in the Valley, I have been teaching for two years at Exodus Fitness Centre and occasionally filling in at gym as well as jumping on different opportunities to introduce yoga to diverse groups. Since I have lived in NZ I have had the opportunity to teach yoga to a church youth group, gang members, gym go-ers, and 100+kg groups."

Maggie says she is looking forward to the Saturday morning 9am classes at the community centre "as an opportunity to give back to the Valley, meet my neighbours, possibly introduce yoga to some firsttimers, help experienced yogis expand their practice, and have a bit of fun."



Goldsmith artist Dorthe Kristensen of Vilders Gallery in Aro street, makes contemporary jewellery with individuality and flair. Vilders also recycles gold jewellery inspired by making it sustainable.

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### Residents' concerns rejected on 123 Aro Street development

By Julia Stace

On May 15, resource consent was given to Todman Partnership's proposal to build two three-bedroom houses on the steep hillside at the rear of 123 Aro Street.



Despite many nearby residents raising a variety of concerns, all their issues were considered to be no more than minor and resource consent was granted without a public hearing. There were a number of conditions attached to the consent, and it would appear that at this stage the applicant is currently working on these, before applying for building consent.

One of these conditions is that the applicant must produce a Construction Management Plan to limit negative effects of vehicles on traffic and "must outline how traffic considerations will be managed to the benefit of local residents, road users and pedestrians".

The building site is up a very narrow, 70m driveway, with a couple of tight bends and no passing room. There is very little parking on-site.

A huge amount of fill will be removed from the site using heavy trucks. A cut of up to 2.5m is permitted by the city council as of right, but on this site a six-metre cut is allowed. More than 250 cubic metres of fill will need to be removed off site.

The resource consent further says:

"The Construction Management Plan must include, but not be limited to, the following matters:

- A limit on the days and hours of work for the heavy vehicles (normal city council working hours for building sites is 7.30am-6.30pm every day but Sunday)
- Methods to manage how other users of the private right of way/ driveway will access other properties when trucks are using the driveways (there are three other households, including a music teacher with visiting pupils)
- The size of trucks involved
- An emergency (24/7) contact phone number
- A public complaints register
- Measures to deal with any collateral damage to vehicles and property
- Measures to deal with any noise and vibration from construction and construction traffic
- Measures to ensure pedestrian safety and to avoid obstruction of the road and foot path by trucks"

Any earth, rock or vegetation that falls on the road, footpath or neighbouring



greencomputers.wellington@gmail.com

property must be cleaned up immediately and not by sluicing into the storm water system.

By the city council's own admission, there is a lack of visibility splay at the end of the driveway. To protect pedestrians using the public footpath from vehicles coming out from the private driveway after construction has finished, a speed hump and mirrors are to be installed. But what about during construction?

The build is expected to take about a year. There will be a lot of tradesmen's vehicles involved that will need street parking.

The conditions of consent are still to be approved, so anyone with concerns can still discuss them with the planning department at the city council. Just quote Service Request Number 300855.

### Kai o Te Aro

It may be winter and a bit cold and miserable, but there are still heaps of gardening action and projects to get involved with!

#### Polhill reserve

You may have noticed some changes to Polhill reserve. The site has been redesigned to encourage families and dog walkers to enjoy the space. There has been a major planting of natives by various groups, which will attract native birds and insects and also break up the wind that comes down the gully. The mountain bike exit has also been modified to increase safety. The council has also donated some fruit trees to Kai o te Aro, which will be planted at the Orchard site. This, along with a couple of trees purchased by Kai o te Aro, will bring the total number of fruit trees planted to 20! We are planning a planting and pruning workshop and you can find out more by joining our facebook group or our email list (see below).

#### Weedeater wanted!

Our trusty weedeater, Orville, has finally left for weedeater heaven and left us with a progressively more wild-looking Orchard site. We are on the hunt for a weedeater we can borrow every month (maybe more often in spring) until we can find the resources for another one. Alternatively, if you have a weedeater and would like to wear the "grass control manager" badge and cut the grass whenever it is necessary, we would be happy to have you on board! You'd be paid in hugs. *(continues next page)* 

### **REGULAR HALL USERS**

Day	Time	Activity & Cost	Contact
Monday	7.15 – 8.15am	Tai Chi Class (Koha)	Yi Ching Mao 384 3588
	6.00 – 8.00pm	Capoeira (\$10 casual /\$40 - 8 classes)	Bobby Semau 027 6961708 bobbysemau@gmail.com
Tuesday	12.00 – 12.45pm	Sit and Be Fit (\$3 per class)	Kathy McConville Contact AVCC 384 8499 community@arovalley.org.nz
	3.30pm -5.00pm	Wellington Community Children's Choir Ages 4 - 6: \$40, Ages 7 - 12: \$50	Julian Raphael 802 5398 communitymusic@xtra.co.nz
Wednesday	7.15 – 8.15am	Tai Chi Class (Koha)	Lynsey 384 5520
	1.15 – 2.45pm	'Sing for your Life' (daytime singing for all) No need to book! \$5 a time	Julian Raphael 802 5398 communitymusic@xtra.co.nz
	6.30 – 8.00pm	Starjam	Genevieve@starjam.org 212 4971 • 021 782 866
Thursday	2.45 – 4.15pm	Kids Jazz Dance Classes \$12 per class / \$100 per term	Debbie: db4dance@gmail.com
	4.30pm – 5.10pm	Group Singing Lessons with Geoff \$23 per lesson	Geoff 021565750
	6.00 – 7.00pm	Samba Hillary Mitchell & Fabiola Stevenson	Hillary Mitchell Hillary.Reid@vuw.ac.nz 021 230 8732
	7.30 – 9.00pm	Yoshukai Karate (\$10 a week – pay what you can afford. Includes 2 <sup>nd</sup> weekly class Northland Community Centre)	Colin Berry 027 249 5342 • 475 9985
Friday	7.15 – 8.15am	Tai Chi Class (Koha)	Lynsey 384 5520
Saturday	9am – 10am	Yoga With Maggie \$5 per class	Maggie Kelly maggiek52@gmail.com
	1.00 – 3.00pm (last Saturday of the month)	Capoeira FREE	Bobby Semau 027 696 1708 bobbysemau@gmail.com

### Epuni Street Composting Project

The Epuni Street composting project continues to gather pace, with the Garage Project donating loads of wood from old packing crates. This wood is currently being recycled and redesigned into a three-bin compost system, which we're calling the "Backyard Alchemy Digesto-tron", capable of digesting 4.5m<sup>3</sup> of green waste (assuming my 5th form calculus still holds). If you'd like to be involved in the project, contact Kelvin Aris at the Community Centre, or Jamie, using the email below.

### **Guerrilla Gardening**

There has been some guerrilla gardening activity in the Valley. A kind local has donated a lemon tree, which has been planted, along with loads of strawberries, in the bed outside the Aro Fish and Chip shop. Bring on the summer strawbs! Over and out.

Jamie Murphy

Facebook group: Kai o te Aro ) email: arogardener@gmail.com

### FOUND



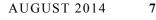
Very friendly young male tabby with white bib and paws, blue flea collar, hasn't been neutered. First

turned up at our house in Adams Tce around Queen's Birthday weekend. We'll adopt him (or find him another home) unless his people get in touch: phone 972 2758 or text 027 636 4693

#### Latest news:

### Consent sought for townhouses on corner of Aro and Devon

A resource consent application has been made to the WCC to demolish a building behind Aro Cafe and build two townhouses. For plans or to express concerns, email: planning@wcc.govt.nz and ask for a copy of the application (SR 312009).





VALLEY VOICE Editors: Max Rashbrooke & Tim Bollinger All contributions and feedback to:

**aro.voice@gmail.com** or 022 694 0871

Valley Voice is published on behalf

Aro Valley Community Council

48 Aro St Wellington

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not of the Aro Valley Community Council (AVCC) unless adopted at a general meeting.

AVCC co-chairs 2014-15:

Roland Sapsford

Charles Barrie

Secretary: Sarah Jane Parton

Treasurer: Rachel Griffiths

Committee members:

Luke Allen, Jay Buzenberg, Cindy Jennett, Jadwyn Lowe, Madeleine Rashbrooke, Julia Stace, Bridget Stocker, Lisa Thompson, Mattie Timmer, Rochelle Walker

Aro Valley Community Centre Coordinator:

Kelvin Aris

Community@arovalley.org.nz

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### School Holiday Programme Dates

Please update your diaries with the year's school holiday programme dates:

Sept/October 29th Sept - 10th October

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Authorised by Jon Field, Level 2, 17 Garrett St, Wellington

## speaking the language of todays market

