

## **Newstead 2021 Inc 2015-16 Annual General Meeting**

5pm. Sunday 27 Nov, 2016. Newstead Arts Hub.

**Present:** John Nieman, Don Culvenor, David Stratton, Ros Hart, Mary Park, Sarah Koschak, Andrew Skeoch, Gen Barlow, Neal Bethune, Gordon Dowell, Geoff Park, Pat Fensham

**Apologies:** Saide Gray (sec), Gary Gibson, Janet Barker, Karly Smith, Kylie Richardson (Treas)

### **2014-15 AGM minutes**

These were accepted as a true & correct record.

### **President's Report:** Andrew Skeoch

2016 has been a highly successful year for Newstead 2021. As in previous years, the action continues to happen around the various sub-groups rather than the core organisation. Of these, Renewable Newstead in particular has advanced boldly. Where the project will lead awaits to be seen, but the core group of people including Geoff, Genevieve, Don and others have showed remarkable initiative, skill and perseverance, and whatever the outcome, it will be due to their hard work.

The number of community projects that operate under 2021's umbrella has expanded. The Community Lunch was reactivated in the middle of the year by Lou Brown and a new 2021 bank account set up to handle its finances. Lou's family commitments have led to her stepping back from the lunch, and it has gone into abeyance the last few months. There have been recent hints that Anthony Santamaria will take over the lunch again, and if so we'll discuss with him the financial arrangements under which he wishes to operate.

Another new bank account was established for the Words in Winter Festival, as Dave Stratton was central to organising the event in Newstead this year. Dave's enthusiasm and organisational initiative led to it being a successful event this year, however The Newstead Arts Salon has expressed interest in co-ordinating the event next year, and if that eventuates, N2021 may wish to transfer this account to The Salon.

A third account has been mooted to facilitate Newstead Walks and Wheels, but not yet established. This group are anticipating receiving funding to establish a network of walking and riding trails both around Newstead and a more ambitious track linking Newstead to Maldon. I understand they are currently in a development phase of route planning with local professionals contributing expertise on a pro bono basis.

Meanwhile, the Community Garden, Rocket Science and Railway Arts Hub continue to flourish and bloom, and I'll refer you to the relevant reports for details.

As an organisation, our website remains a significant way for us to interact with the community. I have given the site a cosmetic make over, featuring banner images of the community garden, arts hub and main street. I've also uploaded a revised membership form, which should be returned to our secretary.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge that we are fortunate to have some pretty remarkable, committed and talented people involved with 2021. Whilst I reckon we look after each other, both collectively and individually, pretty well, the workloads have been heavy on some. As this organisation moves forward, we need to actively encourage new members to get involved. I think this is best achieved gently, by allowing people to find where they may like to contribute best. As they find their engagement, the skills of established members may be communicated and shared. I've personally benefited from the support and knowledge offered by experienced members, and hope to see this mentoring of talent in our community expand.

How to do this more proactively may be something we can discuss. For instance, we may like to tackle it head on with workshops in specific skills such as application writing, using social media or working with community dynamics. On a less formal level, we can continue to have socially-based meetings, which at the same time fulfil our statutory obligations to gather at least four times a year. So as with our last meeting at the Railway Hotel, we can plan for inclusive activities that can be primarily enjoyable, and conduct any business efficiently and quickly.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge everyone for the work they've put into our community this year - not only members but their families. Successes are always a collective effort. The only question for Newstead 2021 is; what happens when moniker expires in five years?

### **Treasurer's Report**

Presented by Mary Park on behalf of Treasurer Kylie Richardson

Mary tabled N2021 Inc Bank balance sheet as at June 30, 2016, general ledger of each account and register of all bank transactions for the year. Initially some transactions for different groups went through the general account but each group clearly has its own account now and transactions will be recorded accordingly.

#### ***Current assets at 30/6/2016 include***

N2021 Inc General Chq account \$3677.85

Arts Hub acc \$10,478.19

Community Garden acc \$950.06

Renewable Newstead Chq acc \$10,158.63

Rocket Science acc \$500

Community Lunch acc \$2

**Total Cash on hand** \$25,766.73

**Total Current Assets** \$25,766.73

**Net Assets** \$25,766.73

Equity

**Current Year Surplus/Deficit** \$5932.73

**Historical Balancing** \$19,834.00

**Total Equity** \$25,766.73

Mary reported on account totals as at 25/11/2016 as follows:

General chq account \$4295.85

Arts Hub \$5388.77

Comm Garden \$2372.09

Renewable Newstead \$50,558.39

Rocket Science \$458.05

Community Lunch \$901.25

Words in Winter \$699.69

Don Culvenor suggested we raise funds to pay a treasurer. Kylie has suggested this would take half a day a week. Do we ask sub-groups to pay a fee to cover this given we are providing core administration for them? Suggests this idea be put to the groups.

Don also suggested N2021 Inc be registered for GST.

## **Group Reports**

### ***Renewable Newstead – Don Culvenor***

RN has recently called for expressions of interest from potential partners to work with RN to switch Newstead to 100% renewable energy. Deadline is Dec 16. EOIs will then be evaluated. EOIs have come in from all sorts of groups. RN meetings with Powercor have gone well. RN has received its next tranche of funding (\$50,000) from the State Govt which will take us through to Feb. Project is still in flux. Don thinks we have a good chance to get something very exciting happening with Powercor's help. Next discussion with Powercor on tariffs due Jan 23 will be interesting. Geoff Park said regardless of what we do, the system we create will hopefully attract people with different philosophical and financial positions.

## *Newstead Arts Hub - Andrew Skeoch*

It's been a year of consolidation and reflection for the arts hub.

I'm pleased to report that we've kept our noses above water financially. Our recurring running costs of \$2894 for the year have been nicely balanced out with our income of \$3143. If we break that income figure down, 53% has come from exhibition and gallery hire, and the remainder 33% from exhibition visitor donations, and 14% from room hire.

So it is clear that exhibitions are our most successful activity, both financially and culturally, and after discussion, the committee of management have affirmed a business model based on a regularly changing program of exhibitions. This is in contrast to a more conventional arts hub model based exclusively on community exhibitions. These change less frequently, being limited by the capacity of local artists to supply new work, and rely heavily on local volunteers to staff the facility. As exhibitions are more static, local engagement decreases, and this format of arts hub often tends toward becoming a tourist information centre and gift shop for passers by. So whilst a more vibrant calendar of exhibitions will require more work networking, promoting and organising, it offers our community many more opportunities to engage with local and regional culture.

Key understandings in this strategy are that the Newstead Arts Hub highlights the aesthetics of the railway building as a venue, and promotes itself as a quality and professional regional arts facility.

In addition to an exhibition program, we also wish to make more of the potential for office space, and use of the building for community events. Dave Stratton has encouraged us to install wifi internet, and one of the rooms be set up as a hot desk for hire by anyone locally who'd like a quiet space in which to work.

The committee of management have generally worked well together. We have had to accept the resignation of our skilled treasurer Mark Pearse due to other commitments, however Sarah has stepped up at least as acting treasurer. The workload does tend to fall on a few shoulders, and we are encouraging of new members when we roll over the committee in March next year.

This year began with clarifying the relationship between the Arts Salon and Arts Hub. Horse proposed a mediated process to draw up some Terms of Reference, and with Chris Johnston facilitating that discussion, we've arrived at a clear working understanding based on personal respect and definitions of the agreements under which we operate. Recent discussions with The Salon, particularly in relation to a vision for the arts hub, and community use of the goods shed, have been very positive and exciting for the future. As far as 2021 is concerned, a key proposal is that The Salon apply for the lease in their own right, rather than 2021 hold it as with the Arts Hub. To that end I have written a letter of support from 2021.

The Arts Hub has had two significant recognitions this year. The first was winning a shire council Heritage award for the quality of the restoration of the building. The second was more practical; a volunteers grant which has allowed us to upgrade the kitchen facilities

significantly, and purchase a few miscellaneous items such as a whiteboard. (Details of this expenditure are appended below).

The exhibitions this year have been of a uniformly high standard. We've had a diversity of professional exhibitors from local (The Blue Door Printmakers) to not quite so local (Michael Ryan), and currently have an exhibition from the Maldon Arts Group. We've also had several Newstead community exhibitions, beginning with Karen Pierce's retrospective of her work with the primary school kids, and more recently the Newstead Historical Society, and the spinners and weavers. It has been especially gratifying to learn how members of these latter two groups have been inspired by the arts hub, and hear of their plans for future use of the building. I think their new found enthusiasm for what they are doing as a result of engaging with the community, has to be one of the best reasons for the arts hub's existence.

### ***Newstead Community Garden- Mary Park***

Acknowledged Janet Barker especially for her work regularly updating the garden website. Mary continued to run the produce exchange throughout the year but called for others to help run it. Ron Snep has offered to run pizza nights every fortnight over summer Mary welcomed the community to make more use of the garden however reminded groups they can't have access exclusive of members. Garden is leased from the Anglican Church diocese.

Events ran as follows:

Jan: the garden harvested 18.2kgs of garlic to sell & raised \$400 through sales during Newstead Live

Feb: new calendar devised. Utopia Indigenous Community visited

March: working bee & fruit tree pruning

May: planted garlic in Helen Watters' paddock. Garden celebrated its 6<sup>th</sup> birthday with a membership day & working bee. Neil Tait demonstrated how to efficiently & effectively operate the pizza oven & installed a new garden sign.

June: Working bee, spud harvest.

August: built compost heap

Sept: Anglican Church held thanks giving service in the garden. BD skincare products maker Stefania Netcu visited

Oct: Garden opened for Castlemaine Festival of Gardens & banked \$1100 raised from plant & tea/coffee/cake sales. Lots of produce not always being used.

### ***Words in Winter – Dave Stratton***

Dave advised he doesn't intend to be involved in WiW in 2017. An Arts Salon sub-committee will run WiW from 2017. Its main function is to support the Gilbert & Sullivan concert, run by Dunolly. This year Enviroshop generously sponsored. Daylesford WiW will no longer fund advertising. WiW is a formal event involving Trentham, Newstead, Clunes, Creswick & Daylesford.

### ***Rocket Science – Dave Stratton***

RS speakers/topics included Janet Trudgeon on the Newstead Echo's history & future, Air conditioners as heat banks & Daniella Greenwood on aged care. Dave is stepping back from his community commitments.

### ***Community Planning – Gen Barlow***

Community Planning within Newstead (apart from RN consultations) has been largely quiet this year. Gen attended 2 MAS meetings – Oct 27 & Nov 24 - called by Gaynor Atkin that brought reps from all 9 towns in Mount Alexander Shire together. Projects most common across all towns were walking & cycling trails, street trees/streetscape renewal & ???New MAS CEO Darren Fuzzard is driving reinvigoration/shire involvement in community planning & shire has appointed a new Community Project Officer Tammy Beckworth. She will submit a community planning bid to MAS budget. MAS is asking community to have their say before Jan 3 to feed into council plan for the next 4 years. Do this at <http://haveyoursay.mountalexander.com.au/council-plan2021>

Moved: That all group reports be accepted - Gordon Dowell. Seconded Mary Park.

### **Election of committee & members**

Andrew vacated the chair & invited John Nieman to oversee election of committee. All positions were open for nomination.

President: Andrew Skeoch. Nominated DC Seconded GB. Elected

Secretary: Saide Gray. Nominated DS. Seconded AS. Elected

Treasurer: Kylie Richardson. Nominated DC. Seconded GB Elected

Andrew resumed the chair & called for nominations of committee members. Elected Pat Fensham, Don Culvenor (for Renewable Newstead), Dave Stratton (for Rocket Science), Gen Barlow (for Community Garden), Ros Hart, Neal Bethune (For affordable housing), Geoff Park, Andrew Skeoch (for Arts Hub), Gary Gibson

Mary Park suggested that each sub-group be represented among members. Additional members are needed to represent Words in Winter & Community Lunch. A quorum is 50% plus 1.

Matters arising

- Saide is looking to step down as secretary in the next year.

### **Matters for discussion/decision**

Geoff Park thanked Andrew Skeoch for his leadership, saying his gentle rigour & persistence had helped N 2021 Inc overcome challenges throughout the year

Andrew is keen for N2021 Inc to meet its obligations to hold four meetings a year. Meeting dates were set for Feb 16, May 18, Aug 17 with an AGM to be held Nov 16.

**Action: Secretary Saide Gray to send out agendas & reminders at least a week beforehand. AS to add meeting dates to N2021 Inc website.**

Andrew has written a letter on N2021 Inc's behalf supporting Newstead Arts Salon's application to VicTrack to lease the Newstead Railway Goods Shed. Neal Bethune asked if it's worth giving VicTrack a report on activities at the rail station to come from N2021 Inc & the Arts Hub. Letter to go to CEO of VicTrack & to include acknowledgements & thanks for advocacy and engagement by Jean Parsons who has worked tremendously with arts hub & other groups.

**Action: AS to write letter to Vic Track.**

N2021 Inc has received a request from the Newstead Arts Salon for N2021 Inc to register as a volunteer organisation with Centrelink to allow jobseekers to claim their volunteer community hours in lieu of work. N2021 Inc currently does not have the appropriate insurance to enable this.

**Action: AS to check auditing & record-keeping requirements & insurance cover & report back to N2021**

Saide is looking to step down as secretary. N2021 to look out for new secretary. Saide will stay in the role till then.

### **Report from Pat Fensham re: Newstead Primary School**

N2021Inc welcomed new member Pat Fensham & relatively new resident. Pat was formerly Director of Planning at Cessnock Council in the Hunter Valley. He and his theatre director wife Jan have 2 kids at Newstead Primary School.

NPS is in a state of disrepair & needs a complete makeover. A masterplan for a new school is needed & the school has applied for funds to be allocated for this purpose in the Vic Govt 2017-18 state budget. Neal Bethune explained he'd been part of the group that successfully lobbied for funds for new Castlemaine Senior Secondary College campus. Pat said Maree Edwards will present a petition to parliament to this effect from Newstead. He asked N2021 Inc members to encourage others to write letters to Education Minister James Merlino & to sign the petition. Pat said if funding was made available next year the school would need to mobilise support & engagement from the community as the brief for a master plan asks for community involvement. NB advised presenting pictorial evidence of disrepair to minister & ED Dept important. Geoff Park commented that increasingly we see families moving to Newstead who then send their kids to schools elsewhere so an upgrade/new school is important for community's future.

**Action: GB to write letter on behalf of N2021 Inc to Ed Minister James Merlino advocating for funds for a new school.**

**Report from new Loddon Ward rep on Mount Alexander Shire:** Incoming Cr John Nieman spoke briefly about his motives for joining council, noting a reason he came to Newstead was vibrancy of the community & activities of N2021. He will seek to represent the ward to the best of his ability.

Meeting closed.