

Trust aims to fund social good

JOYCE WYLLIE

Tom Sturgess told his U3A audience last Friday that this would be "just a chat". And a very enthusiastic and lively chat it was.

The first topic he covered was the Golden Bay Community Trust (GBCT). This was set up in 1999, and 23 years later Tom stated that he "was inordinately proud and chuffed to announce that a lease has been signed with Whakatū Trust to allow Whakatū to expand to 160 hectares of seabed."

This, plus 1000ha of other interests, will net the GBCT \$350,000 per year. These funds will be distributed for "social good" in Golden Bay – necessary and much appreciated money for health and education needs.

Tom went on to explain that after he immigrated to New Zealand in 1996, Bay resident Bob Butts initiated a discussion about appropriate places for mussel farms and how there could be something in it for the Golden Bay community. The idea was to see mussel farming develop slowly so it would be sustainable, and to keep it three nautical miles offshore so there was less visual impact. Bob and Tom plus local lawyer Susan Yorke then set up the GB Community Trust. They put in an ambitious application through the Resource Management Act process to occupy the air, the seabed and the water for Golden Bay. Some time passed and the outcome was an agreement that "an entity would have 20 per cent of Golden Bay".

Long years have passed since then, including litigations, and Tom said that, though progress had been slow, "in the end it has worked". The best interests of Golden Bay have been kept at heart, and the result has been growth in the funds the trust can distribute.

Helen Bracefield, a member of the committee that has responsibility for distribution of this money, explains that there are funding rounds in February and October. She would like to emphasise that there is also an additional amount set aside, for allocation throughout the year, to assist children with special needs who may require urgent support.

Helen is keen that the community is aware that anyone can apply at any time for financial support "to enhance a child's wellbeing or welfare that the family can't afford". It may be for appointments for eyes, teeth, paediatric visits or other health issues, for assessments for learning and other educational



Helen Bracefield and Tom Sturgess deep in discussion at the recent U3A meeting. Photo: Joyce Wyllie.

reasons, or for boots and gear to enable children to be active in sport. Decisions on this fund can be made within 48 hours to meet urgent needs.

Applications can be made at goldenbaycommunitytrust.org.nz, or contact Mohua Social Services.

The resource consent that GBCT was granted includes six species of seaweed as well as the 6000-hectare Aquacultural Management Area (AMA). This means that there is potential for seaweed to be produced and harvested in Golden Bay waters.

That information led to the second topic in Tom's "chat", which will be covered in a future article.

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THE FLYFISHERS WIFE

Green light for blue penguin fence

JO RICHARDS

Following last week's decision by Tasman District Council, a pair of fences, designed to protect a resident blue penguin colony, will be constructed on the western arm of Port Taranaki.

The installation of the twin fences was recommended by a hearing panel in preference to an original proposal made by Mohua/Golden Bay Blue Penguin Trust for a continuous structure which would have excluded all members of the public.

The plan to restrict public access has been challenged by members of the Golden Bay community, 192 of whom signed a petition criticising the trust's proposal.

Anglers will be able to gain access through a locked gate, however, provided they have obtained a permit, but all dogs – even those on leashes – will be banned. Anyone seeking a permit is required to apply to TDC.

Including the cost of materials, which has been funded by the trust, the cost of the fence is estimated to come in under \$10,000. Ongoing maintenance expenses will be met by TDC and recovered through rates.

The impact of the new fences on the health of the penguin colony will be monitored by the trust, with the protection measures reviewed by the Golden Bay Community Board every three years.

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