

Minutes of a meeting of the QLDC Community & Services Committee held in the Council Chambers, 10 Gorge Road on Thursday 6 April 2023 commencing at 1.00 pm.

Present

Councillor E Whitehead (Chair), Councillor B Bruce (online,) Councillor L Guy, Councillor M Wong, Councillor C Tucker.

In Attendance

Briana Pringle (Parks & Open Spaces Planner), Michelle Morss (Strategy and Policy General Manager), Yvette Ridley (Parks & Reserves Officer Volunteer/Community) Alixandra Villis (Governance Advisor, online), Jon Winterbottom (Governance Team Leader)

Apologies

Councillor Ferguson was away with approved leave of absence.
Councillor Tucker was absent.

On the motion of Councillor Guy and Councillor Wong the Community & Services Committee resolved that the apologies be accepted.

Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

No declarations were made.

Public Forum

1. Ian Raddenklau spoke on behalf of the Wakatipu Croquet Club regarding the gumtrees in Jardine Park which the club would like removed. He expressed his disappointment that the Council Parks Team are still suggesting the trees removal be declined by the Committee. He discussed the frustrations the club is experiencing and brought up point 4.3 in the Tree Policy which would allow their removal. Also, the feedback gathered via the Council website from the public is in majority in agreement that the trees be removed. He reiterated the safety of the public being paramount in this matter.

Matters Lying on the Table

There were no matters lying on the table.

Confirmation of Agenda

On the motion of Councillor Guy and Councillor Wong the Community & Services Committee resolved that the agenda be confirmed without addition or alteration.

Confirmation of Minutes

On the motion of Councillor Wong and Councillor Guy the Community & Services Committee resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2023 be confirmed without addition or alteration.

1. Request for Removal of Council Trees in the Whakatipu Basin

A report was presented by Briana Pringle on three applications to remove and replace trees on reserve land in the Whakatipu Basin. The report was taken as read and the floor was opened to questions.

Councillor Guy asked whether staff could explain the budgeting restrictions around the removal of the Larch trees in Arrowtown. She continued by reminding Officers that in 2014 any tree over 2.4 meters was considered protected across Arrowtown. Minister Smith changed this, and the trees were reassessed. The community want to know if either assessment was done as far as the golf course, or if any trees were given historic consideration. Ms Pringle responded that the Wilding Group receive a budget to complete this operation within Arrowtown at the Golf Course. If the Group has approval for this operation to remove the trees, then there will be no security of funding in future years, the priorities may change in future years and the budget to tackle these may not be available. She went on to explain that Arrowtown used to have a protected tree zone as part of the District Plan, but this did not cover this part of Centennial Avenue (only the older areas of the town and only trees of a height up to 2.4m). Any assessments and work done before 2014 went through Council for approval. However, this process was lifted in 2014. Through the District Plan, the Council can protect significant trees, the trees on private land can also be protected if they meet the definition of a significant tree under the proposed district plan. Not all exotic trees can be labelled as good or bad, many exotic trees do not spread. It can be a matter of the wrong tree in the wrong place, which is causing the spread of seed sources and/or other undesirable effects on the surrounding landscapes. Seeds can travel 10-40k in high winds, in low-lying tussock these can seed and germinate quickly. The trees on the Golf Course can be left unfelled but their seeds will continue to be an issue.

Councillor Guy expressed that the community have a lot of appreciation for the autumnal colours that the Larch trees provide, if these trees do need to be removed then there needs to be a plan to stagger the removal so that the visuals are not affected all at once and that it remains a tourist attraction and boosts the Arrowtown economy. She requested details on maintenance, irrigation, and costs of replanting. She requested a master plan to be made available for the public with details of the mature trees. Ms Pringle replied that a master plan could only consider Council owned land and that the Tree Policy has a 2:1 replacement strategy. Council Officers are currently revisiting the Tree Policy to see how it has worked over the last 5 months.

Councillor Wong asked whether the resolutions regarding the eucalyptus in Jardine Park are bound by tree policy. To which Ms Pringle confirmed that the Council is bound, but the committee can make decisions outside of the set policies.

Councillor Whitehead expressed that the Tree Policy is largely sound, she mentioned that whilst the agenda for this Committee Meeting was short, it shows the complexity of the tree discussion. She expressed her view that it is becoming more difficult to understand the value of trees to different individuals. The seed source of Larch trees on Centennial Avenue needs to be considered. However, unique situations are present on some sites. Councillor Whitehead requested that when Officers are reviewing the Tree Policy, could they think about insights in different ways based on their complexity. Ms Pringle replied that Officers won't be addressing that in this version of the review as we don't have this data and the Policy isn't mature enough yet.

Ms Ridley explained that the Whakatipu Wilding Control Group has had funding from MPI and Central Government. They have been doing maintenance and stopping the seed source program in the district. However, the funding for the next financial year is for maintenance which only covers areas which have already been cleared, sadly there will be no funding to remove seed sources

Councillor Guy asked whether, if the budget is used to take the Larch trees out of Centennial Avenue, would the Group have the budget to continue work on seed spreading. Ms Ridley replied that as the Group are under a lot of pressure due to long procurement processes, they are having to do the whole financial years' worth of work in 6 months so if they were to do as Councillor Guy suggested then they may lose money.

Councillor Whitehead then proposed that the resolutions be separated, and amendments be made to points 2, 3 and 4 and an addition of point 2a.

On the motion of Councillor Wong and Councillor Whitehead it was resolved that the Community & Services Committee amend the original recommendation to the points below:

1. **Note** the contents of this report
2. **Approve** the request by Arrowtown Golf Club to remove all wilding conifer trees within the Arrowtown golf course lease area.

On the motion of Councillor Guy and Councillor Wong it was resolved that the Community & Services Committee include the point below:

- 2a. **Request** that officers return to this committee with a staged plan for the removal and subsequent replacement of the trees on Centennial Avenue.

On the motion of Councillor Wong and Councillor Guy it was resolved that the Community & Services Committee amend the original recommendation to the point below:

3. **Approve** the request from the Whakatipu Wilding Conifer Control Group to remove wilding conifer trees on QLDC reserve land between One Mile to Sunshine Bay Reserve.

On the motion of Councillor Wong and Councillor Guy it was resolved that the Community & Services Committee amend the original recommendation to the point below:

4. **Approve** the request from Wakatipu Croquet Club to remove eight mature Eucalyptus trees growing on QLDC reserve land at Jardine Park, Kelvin Peninsula (aligning with the removal of wilding pines in Jardine Park in May 2023).

Unanimous support was shown for these decisions.

The meeting concluded at 1:42pm.

Confirmed as a true and correct record:

CHAIR

DATE