



# GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

To be held on Wednesday, 19 August at 7.30 pm, but the venue is still unclear at this stage. It will definitely not be at the Community Centre again until the pandemic is over. We are still canvassing options, but this is to be confirmed by a community broadcast. Whatever the venue, it will certainly be a full agenda, so we look forward to welcoming you on the night.

## GREENWICH VILLAGE GAMES AS WE KNOW IT UNDER THREAT

### LANE COVE COUNCIL'S DRIVE TO DEVELOP AT ANY COST RUNS THE RISK OF BOB CAMPBELL OVAL, THE HOME OF THE GAMES, BECOMING UNSUITABLE FOR OUR UNIQUE AND BELOVED INSTITUTION

One of the most important projects on the books of Lane Cove Council is the 'development' of Bob Campbell Oval (BCO). This small piece of precious green space which is enjoyed by all types of local people and activities, is now set to become a project manager's dream, with every square inch of space now being pummelled into submission.

**What is so troubling about the BCO plan is that the Greenwich community was not advised about the plan until after Council had secured \$3.62 million for works at the oval through a grant from the Department of Planning.** This grant approval was recommended on 19 May 2020, before Council had even submitted its amended SLS Plan to the Department. Council applied for this grant under a scheme to supplement open space for the increased population in St Leonards.

The 'hook' to secure the grant was to link it to the huge developments in the St Leonards and Crows Nest Precinct via a proposed Shared User Path (SUP), which will run from BCO, along St Vincents Road, then up River Road to Greenwich Road.

We now know that Council had preliminary discussions with just two Greenwich users of BCO - The Greenwich Sports Association and the Greenwich Village Games (GVG) Committee, before the plan went to the Department.

But the plan that Council now proposes has changed from the one the Department of Planning approved for funding.

We now have a walking track, two squarish dog walking spaces - one for small dogs, one for big (we're not sure what the middling-size dogs do - perhaps just find their level), a playground out of sight of the dog walking area, a new amenities block, a netball court, extended parking facilities, and the doozy of them all, an artificially turfed sporting field, right bang smack in the middle, with stronger lighting to enhance evening use. Never mind the hapless residents who live around BCO who used to enjoy their peaceful evenings.

And never mind the unresolved questions about the health and environmental impacts of long-term exposure to artificial turf.

At our last Council meeting, the General Manager advised that the micro-plastic run off from the sporting field will be retained by a kerb up to 200mm in height. This, and a proposed picket fence, will require a drastic scaling back of the GVG, a unique community event held every four years which has involved the whole of the

Greenwich community since 1988.

## 'Community Consultation' a hollow joke - but we're not laughing

Apart from the two entities mentioned above, no one else in the community has ever been consulted. Better late than never, Council has now voted to put its plans for BCO out for community consultation. Unfortunately, our recent experiences with 'consultation' have been extremely dispiriting.

Something has gone very wrong with Council's community consultation.

It seems that council staff determine the size, scale and details of projects, run them past a few selected stakeholders for their comments, submit them for funding (in the case of BCO) and then present these projects as almost done deals to Councillors and the community.

It is not fair that Council leaves stakeholders at odds with one another through selective engagement. We all care deeply about where we live and we have almost always managed to resolve different objectives. The shared use of the beautiful space at BCO is just one example.

We see Council's community consultation as a simple tick the box exercise.

We are certainly tired of the way that our input is not incorporated into reports to our Councillors. We are asking our elected Councillors to listen more to what the community has to say and not to rely on Council reports alone.

We believe that BCO is a unique natural green space that offers flexibility for active and passive recreation. The sporting field could stand some improvements - it does need better drainage and upkeep of the grass

surface. The changing/storage rooms need a revamp and a Shared User Path is a plus.

But, if BCO plans go ahead, the Greenwich community will lose a precious large natural green open space.

SLS marked a low point in community engagement. We ask that Councillors do not allow this to be repeated with BCO.

### DETAIL IS MINIMAL ON THE SHARED USER PATH THAT UNDERPINNED COUNCIL'S GRANT APPROVAL

We have no detail from Council but if this path is delivered, it will be an engineering triumph! It seems to us that construction of the path will require tree removal and utilities relocation along St Vincents Road. We are also unclear as to how the Path will be constructed from Allawah Place to Greenwich Road – already a narrow footpath on a busy road.

### GOLF COURSE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS CAREFUL THOUGHT

This proposed development represents a huge Council spend of between \$20 million and \$60 million. The scope and impact of the development warrants careful consideration. **The deadline for comment is 16/8.**

The two recent Council 'drop in' sessions at the golf club were attended by various Lane Cove councillors. The meetings were at capacity and heated, with much of the frustration aimed at lack of consultation to this point.

The GCA feels this project is not an urgent one. This is not the time to be looking at a project of such scale in a climate where there are so many financial risk factors. Furthermore, this is a time for assessment of all open natural green space options to ensure the best outcome for the community.

We object to the appropriation of green open space for a driving range and a putt putt course. Adjoining residents will be impacted by lights and noise, as it will

operate seven days a week from 6 am to late in the evening.

Some are asking if the sport facility should be located elsewhere and whether it is needed at all. Willoughby Council is going to build six multi-purpose courts at the Gore Hill Precinct, so people in the St Leonards area are more likely to go there. Others are concerned that the large community spaces in the current clubhouse should not be lost. The Greenwich Community Centre is no longer easily accessible for community events and the golf clubhouse offers an alternative venue.

Again, there is a lot of good sense and intelligence in the community, which Council would do well to listen to.

### MANN'S POINT

At the July meeting a motion from our Mayor, Councillor Palmer, was passed to *"develop a plan for the Manns Point lookout area to acknowledge it as an iconic viewpoint and enhance its natural features (with) community consultation (to) be undertaken when developing the plan"*.

This is an ideal project to tap into the resources of the community from the outset. We hope this happens. And we also expect that our Council will ensure that it fully explores whether this site has significance for the Aboriginal community.

### SLS - WHERE IS IT UP TO?

Only the Department of Planning (and perhaps our Council) knows; we continue to be told it is being assessed. We do know it won't be included in the mid- August release of the overall 2036 Plan for St Leonards and Crows Nest, the one that attracted hundreds of submissions.

Meanwhile, the juggernaut of overdevelopment is moving at frightening speed. The latest behemoth is a 72-storey tower on the College of Law site in St Leonards. At 243 metres, this building will be just a one metre short of the Chifley Building in the CBD.

### Now for some heartening news - bushland

Lane Cove is noted for its lovely bushland reserves, and credit must go to Lane Cove Council who had the foresight to employ trained Regenerators to look after the bush. Encouraged by the pivotal and active Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society Ltd, this began in a small way in Warraroon Reserve more than forty years ago and continues today.

Many residents, with Council support, look after their slice of the bush, plant native shrubs and trees in their gardens, helping the growth of corridors, linking reserves, and making wider access to habitat possible for native animals.

Methods used in those early days set the framework for the present, and were carefully planned to control stormwater, identify weeds, and mitigate fire risk.

A new book, *Early Bush Regeneration in Lane Cove*, by Sheila Walkerden, has been published about the years from the early 1990s to 2008 and Lane Cove Bookery has the book for \$15.00. There will also soon be copies at the Library.

### ...and biking

We at the GCA fully support safe cycling. So it was great to see the successful Active Travel program initiated by Greenwich Public School recently. This involved free checking of kids' bikes - brakes, seat height, etc - by bike mechanics, and an Active Travel Map for each child. On the day we checked there was a noticeable reduction in cars dropping kids at school, so less congestion. When you think that only a few years back no kids rode to school, this is a positive initiative!

### STAY IN TOUCH

We are gingerly stepping into the 21st century and learning to use FB. Help us by searching for Greenwich Community Association group and click join! Otherwise, please visit our website regularly. If you wish to receive electronic postings email [jsouthwood@spectrafin.com.au](mailto:jsouthwood@spectrafin.com.au)

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