



Greenwich Community Association – President’s Report 2023

2023 was another busy year for the Community Association where we hosted six Public Meetings, produced 18 Newsletters and lobbied the Lane Cove Council and NSW State Government over a number of planning and development related matters.

Minutes of meetings and copies of newsletters are accessible on the GCA website, and both these documents show accurately the actions of the GCA during 2023.

We are the voice of the Community and the importance of what we do is even more relevant now, with the substantial number of major residential developments that have occurred and continue to occur in East Ward over the last 3 years. Including, the State Governments plans for increased residential density around town centres and transport hubs.

Major issues that we have addressed over the past year include:

Bob Campbell Oval

Having led the charge from plastic grass to natural grass along with the Naked Grass Group, we have been dismayed at the lack of progress with no contractors appointed 2 years after the grass change was approved by Council. Questions to our ward Councillors have only yielded the response that design, etc is progressing with Councillors unable to influence Council’s program as it becomes “unwanted interference”.

We have also just heard that Council proposes that the oval is not made available to dogs as there appears to have been problems currently with dogs digging holes, leaving sticks and owners not cleaning up waste. The Community must be consulted on this.

266 Longueville Road

Despite changing the use of this Council owned site, Council supported a change of use from Residential Aged Care and Seniors Living to just Seniors Living via a simple Section 4.55 rather than the more conceivable approach of a new DA.

A new DA would have delayed the project a little and allowed proper consideration of the new use and design , but it could have put at risk the Council’s Sport & Rec Facility Program which was dependent upon \$30m being paid to Council by the 266 Longueville Rd developer. The GCA submitted arguments to the Sydney North Planning Panel and many individuals addressed the Panel, but without effect.

New Sport & Rec Facility

Disappointingly, the then Mayor, Councillor Zbik, used his casting vote on a number of occasions to push this project into construction without a confirmed business plan or operator. Four Councillors voted to bed down issues such as ongoing running methods and costs, including risks to Council, and only four Councillors voted to proceed immediately.

The project has proceeded with residents (rate payers) committing to pay the \$75M (approx.), but without confidence in the ongoing costs of running or maintaining the facility, and with very little increase to the physical facilities currently available on site.

In addition, many residents were and are concerned at the loss of mature trees and permanent damage to the Lane Cove Golf Course valley. Again, the GCA (along with many other residents) made strong representation to delay the project to provide greater financial security, but to no avail.

Meet the Candidates – NSW Government State Election

On the 15 March the GCA supported a ‘Meet the Candidates Forum’ run by Don Murchison. Three candidates attended and spoke, however the sitting member, Anthony Roberts, was unable to attend.

Closure of Canberra Avenue – St Leonards South

The GCA made a submission on this matter (along with others) arguing that this should not occur until traffic volumes are known and not using years out of date traffic figures. The Traffic Committee ignored our submission and approved the closure presumably as the developer already had been told that the closure would occur.

One of our major concerns with this is the lack of response to any queries raised in writing to the GM (which is the correct channel for communication). Almost without exception (apart from an acknowledgement that an email has been received) we get no response from the GM. This then begs the question ‘how best to go forward’?

Other Matters

A major initiative this year by the GCA has been the formation of the Greenwich Community Garden Sub-Committee with a view to creating a Community Garden. Design & Project Plans have been completed and it is hoped that the identified site can be confirmed. A funding application is proposed to be made to Council by 01 March this year.

Two Special Meetings were held during 2023. The first on the 19 July involved an excellent presentation by Karen Smith of the Aboriginal Heritage Office. Topics covered were the aboriginal history of Greenwich and surrounding areas. This meeting was attended by over 100 people.

The second special meeting involved a presentation on the 18th October by Julie Dawsley on Bushcare in the Lane Cove area. This was a well-presented event and gratefully received by the community.

As we move into 2024, we will continue to act for the community as will also maintain relationships with the three other community groups geographically near to us and within the Lane Cover LGA:

- Longueville Residents Association
- Northwood Action Group
- Gore Creek Valley Action Group

Finally, I would like to thank our hard working and innovative committee:

Vice President, Alan Winney – the mature voice of reason who always comes from a well thought out position.

Comms Secretary, Julia Sharp – dynamic and effective who apart from everything else has taken on the leadership role for the Community Garden.

Minutes Secretary, Karen Macalister-Hohnen – calm, professional and efficient. Also, part of the Community Garden sub-committee and was instrumental in drafting up the Management Plan for this initiative.

Treasurer, Patricia Quealey – bright and energetic – always with well thought out opinions and actions.

Peter Stavely, Committee – A great contributor to the team with very real professional input into analysis of developments, etc.

Don Murchison, Committee – whilst don has been very busy this last year with personal issues to resolve, he still has found time to contribute on all matters, which has been appreciated.

Mary Scanlan, Committee consultant – has been a part time committee member this last year but most importantly she has gifted her experience, training, and expertise to produce drawings for the Community Garden. This is essential for the land agreement and Council funding application.

We have achieved a lot with still much to achieve, so we urge anyone interested to join our committee and contribute just as much time as they are able.

Peter Deane, President