

Pōkeno Community Committee Chairmans Report January 2025

I feel privileged to be able to present this Report as Chair of the Pōkeno Community Committee.

Pōkeno is an interesting town, growing by the year with many opportunities still available for future growth

An amazing place to live and be employed, so please don't be distracted by some negatives you may hear.

There is ample opportunity to discuss your thoughts and ideas so let's be positive for "Pōkeno our Place"

You may ask what growth has taken place and why there is not more development happening.

Well people say the WDC or PCC needs to bring more Retail Business's to Pōkeno, but that is not the business we are in, as we both are not Developers.

Look at some of the land in the Village part of Pōkeno, all privately owned, what are they doing on our behalf, regrettably not a lot.

Many are hidden owners who want stuff done but not at their cost.

Wouldn't it be great to see the old Market area developed, plus some of the sections along Market Street or Great South Road, to enhance Pōkeno.

It is not easy to attract "big ticket" retailers, especially when you have a massive new Shopping Mall just up the road at Drury

The Pōkeno Business Connect are trying in their endeavours to get Pōkeno business's joining together to promote us, and I know early in New Year they are going to have another networking night to share their ideas.

I look forward to that

On the Commercial business side of Pokeno, it is great to see new business's coming to Town and making their presence felt, with modern new buildings and outlook on Pōkeno

Seems to change weekly, and makes a drive around pleasant seeing "new faces" well presented

Also on the positive side some of the growth and facilities achieved over the past twelve months has given us all a lift, and I thank our PCC members for their time and ideas that they put into these projects.

The New Toilet block was put in place during 2024 and is readily retaining its place as one of the most "used" in the Waikato District.

Proud to say the design we agreed upon has now become the model to be used around the Waikato District, and with its Modular construction, means we could add onto if and when required

Nice to see the Park re-instated as well

Yes it was a frustrating exercise at times, but needed Health and Safety rules and road closures, especially after early abuse given to workers during project

The Main Street Project saw an absolute upheaval to the Town and Business's with a lot of anger around closures, design, what is going on comments, even to the fact of abuse (personal) to WDC staff, Contractors, Road Maintenance and even Pokeno residents.

Yes it was hard, but we had to decide the best way forward, by doing two Projects in One, or we might have still been going

When a Project is drawn up and consented, some of the stuff underground, can not always be seen, so can prolong procedures plus blow out costs.

All in all we got through it and now have a well setup Main Street and Roundabout to compliment entry to Town.

The question will be asked why is there still two pieces of the Main Street, not re-done Simple when these Projects were costed, prices rise and often mean Projects get cut back. Hence the fact we now need to go through Planning and Consent for the extra pieces, and with Rooding Funding from Government taking a huge hit, may take some time to get funds

The Sports Park at Munro Road was first muted to be programmed in 2014, and whilst little traction took place in 2024, I am able to announce that the Working Plans to start construction will be signed off in February 2025, to enable construction to re-commence.

Thanks to everyone including the kids at Pōkeno School, who made their ideas known through a school project, great input.

The Pōkeno Charitable Trust will come into play on raising extra funding for the Sportspark, over and above the WDC contribution, so plenty of work needed for that.

Our next major project to get underway will be the Hub/Library based on Great South Road and Market Street

A Project Manager has been appointed and plans drawn up from all the Consultation meetings we held.

Money for this was allocated in Council budgets a couple of years back, with the funds available half in 2024/25 and half in 2025/26 .

As Chair of the Community Committee I have had over the past few months the privilege of attending the Revised Council Long Term Plan (LTP) review meetings which is now re-writing the Nine Year LTP.

Wow what an eye opener, the Council has a huge job going forward to keep the District with massive cost increase and new Government regulations, Three Waters being one of the changes that has meant loaded costs.

Was muted a 25% Rates increase to cover costs over the next nine years.

Can assure you it wont happen, and the Mayor and all Councillors, have the WDC staff under real pressure to find ways and means to keep Waikato District going forward but under a diminished pot of funds.

It was also a great forum to remind those in Ngaruawahia, we do exist in the North Waikato, think they get a bit wary of me asking questions.

At one stage I started to write down the hours I spend on stuff relating to Pokeno, yep huge over 300 plus hours, plus what our PCC members contribute as well, and we are volunteers, no funding, so please we are advocating for you, so gets a bit painful when people take to Social Media and call us out.

There are so many ways you can discuss what you feel, so please understand we are human and Ratepayers as well.

Security/Plate recognition Cameras are still in our plans, so know they haven't been put aside, we just need somewhere to host and monitor the six Waikato DC towns that are awaiting installation

Events like the Christmas Parade, Fun Run, Christmas in the Park continue to grow and give us something of our own.

Thanks to all that help in their planning and presentation.

Amazing to see the continued re-construction at Pōkeno School, turning into a real asset, plus aren't the Gala days fun.

The Tennis and Recreation Hub at Avon Road, continues to grow in the amount of people who use, not just for sport, so great little complex.

The discussion on Pōkeno continues to bubble along in the background and will need "airing" again at some stage.

During the year people had the chance to share their views on the Proposed Pōkeno Marae and over 400 placed Sub-missions for or against.

Will take some time for Council to consider before a decision is made, Won't be an easy decision.

Really looking forward to the electric trains starting to operate from Pukekohe next Monday, will really give Bus 44 something to contact to

I want to thank the Committee members who have put time in the past year, Helen, Ric, Ginny, Janet, Mike, Bronwyn, Cecilia, and Ian, not all of you lasted the distance, but thank all for their input.

To those moving on Cecilia and Ian your valued input was appreciated, many thanks, it wasn't always easy

We will continue the "fight" for "Pōkeno Our Place".

Also we would be interested in talking to anyone who might want to join us on the Pokeno CC later in the year, because it's the next ten or twenty years that count, but the hard work and go forward starts now

Can I say to anyone who has the idea of standing for Council at the October elections, take time to discuss and understand what you are standing for, because as I said earlier the new Nine Year LTP workings, have given me a huge insight, plus I cannot believe the hours Councillors spent on WDC workshops and meetings.

Make sure you get all the reading you can, every set of Minutes, every By-Law along with all else printed, as its not just rocking up and cutting Rates.

Also the fact that WDC staff do the Governance and costings from the questions Councillors put forward on behalf of Residents and Ratepayers, fourteen Councillors "fighting" for their patch.

It is an honour to be Chair of the Pōkeno Community Committee and I look forward to carrying on making Pōkeno a better place for us all

Allen Grainger