

PRESIDENTS REPORT

As this is the last newsletter of 2007 may I extend season's greetings to all residents and friends of the Omaha Beach Community. I hope that you are able to take a good break and spend time resting and relaxing at this great location.

I want this, my final column as president of the OBC, to be a positive one. Too often I have had to report delays and frustrations encountered as we try to push on with the programme of improvements agreed at our planning sessions. I believe we have achieved a great deal this year and I can see positive signs of change now emerging.

FIRE APPEAL

I want to pay tribute to the Trustees of the Fire and Emergency services appeal. Elsewhere in the newsletter we report on the completion of the new station and on the team involved. Without the huge effort put in by the Trustees the volunteers the suppliers and I note, without the generous gift of the land by the Whistler family there would be no station.

We are all going to benefit from having the brigade sited so close to us.

PROJECTS

I also want to say how pleased I am to be able to confirm that; work is underway on the causeway bridge footpath; that the impact of the Tonkin Taylor report has been substantially diminished and that the harbour seawall repair should commence in the New Year.

We have been embarrassed on many occasions when progress promised and communicated to residents fails to happen. At the recent Forum it was suggested that we undertake no new projects until the old ones had been completed. I strongly disagree.

I do understand the frustrations that members express with the time it takes to work through even the simplest issues. No one understands this better than the OBC committee. The hours spent on the projects listed above particularly the walkway footpath and Tonkin Taylor have been huge. They have been contributed without question or complaint by busy people.

COUNCIL

At the Forum planning meeting the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Northern region councillors were given a very clear expression of anger and of disbelief that RDC staff might think that their process driven and rules centred approach was what ratepayers wanted.

We were delighted with the outcome of the election. Penny Webster is a long time friend and with seven new councillors (out of 12) we are hoping to see the change in attitude that Penny has talked about.

I do not know that the boots and all approach recently reported being taken with council staff by the new Far North District Mayor Wayne Brown will work but I am sure it rang bells for a lot of us. Treating ratepayers as customers might seem a novel approach but it deserves being taken seriously. We have found the best way to work with the Council is to cut out personality issues and deal with facts and I think that this approach has served us best. Vector, whose proactive approach in dealing with the problems exposed by the July storm has shown just how a public body can go about working with the community and dealing with their concerns

There have already been encouraging signs with RDC contributing to our expanded security patrol and to the cameras about to be installed in the Surf Club car park. I am also delighted that Insite security has been warranted by RDC to enforce local bylaws.

OMAHA PARK DEVELOPMENT

We see the development of the high ground to the south (Omaha Park) as the most pressing threat to this community and we intend to work with other interested parties to oppose the project as effectively as we can. Any suggestions and offers of help will be gratefully accepted. We envisage that we will have to build up a fighting fund and be prepared for a long battle. We have no doubt that the proposers of the scheme will bring considerable resources to support their application.

The latest property valuations suggest an above average rise for this area. Council will say that rates do not rise by the amount of the increase but unless all of Rodney has moved up by a similar proportion (which I very much doubt) then those areas with the higher increase will absorb a greater proportion of the total rate levy. We are presently looking to establish how much is raised from the Omaha area and how much spent. We are also following up the apparent inequity of the storm water levy which we pay but for which we receive no benefit.

All in all then a busy and mostly satisfying year. I want to pay tribute to the hardworking OBC committee and to thank you our fellow property owners for your support and encouragement.

A happy Xmas and prosperous new year to you all.

Greg Stenbeck President Omaha Beach Community Inc