



# BRAIDWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

General Meeting May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022  
Braidwood Servicemens Club

## Minutes

The meeting commenced at 5.36pm with 46 people in attendance.

### **Welcome and apologies**

Sue Murray welcomed everyone in attendance and noted that regular monthly meetings would be held from now on, after interruptions to meetings due to Covid restrictions since 2020.

Apologies: Cr Bryce Wilson, Cr Michele Biscotti, Cecile Galiazzo, Maria Bakas, Alison Sexton-Green, Kirsty Altenburg

Sue welcomed our guests - Mayor Kenrick Winchester, Cr Katrina Willis, Cr Mareeta Grundy, and Cr John Preston.

Kenrick Winchester introduced himself as a 3<sup>rd</sup> time councillor (since 2012), but this time as Mayor. He believed the council was more collegial this time. Kenrick was born in Queanbeyan and his grandmother was from Monga. Kenrick said he was trying to keep Braidwood front of mind as we don't have a Braidwood councillor.

Katrina Willis commented she liked Braidwood's draft Vision and its clarity of purpose. She said that all local communities have long list of wants and needs, and that she wants to listen to them all. Her main goal was to improve engagement and genuine representation. She wanted more action on climate change, housing, caring for the environment.

Mareeta Grundy said she was a farmer's daughter from Riverina and now lives in Bywong. She said she had a good connection with Braidwood and likes to visit. She was concerned with the regions getting left behind and communities neglected. Mareeta said she disliked injustice and wanted to represent people in a meaningful manner. She wanted to make a difference for those who felt like they had no voice.

John Preston has been a Bungendore resident for 25 years. He believed there was more that united council than divided them. John wanted to bring Palerang back into QPRC. He thought heritage issues were important and wanted to make heritage work. John wanted to be 'in the tent' and will vote on his values.

### **1. BCA Updates**

a) Affordable Housing: Sarah Leheny reported the group had been speaking with / getting advice from the Housing Matters Action Group (Bellingen / Nambucca region). She said

several NSW councils now have Affordable Housing policies (Bega Valley has a very comprehensive one) and that we were in support of the proposed similar policy for QPRC. Sarah had spoken with housing providers about what they can offer. They are very keen to work with us. Advice had been sought from Madeleine Boulton (Director, Regional Housing Policy, Department of Regional NSW) and the group had accepted an offer of help from Yolande Norris to write our proposal for council. The group intended to speak with QPRC staff and councillors, and state and federal members. Sarah commented the group was willing to work with council to do the work, we just need land, approval and funding.

b) Community Transport: Martin Glover reported a small group of locals were working with a program run by Valmar Community Transport. The program was now up and running now and is able to be part of an individual's approved Aged Care package. However, there is a fee involved and the group were looking for more drivers. Martin said there were some hoops to jump through to become an approved driver, but they were not too onerous.

c) Skate Park: Catherine Bell reported the group (BYPA) was making great progress. They were working closely with QPRC and PWA (Public Works Advisory). They are using the expertise of an accountant to manage the grant. All parties were meeting monthly, and all activities are on track for a December opening.

d) Proposed Seniors Activities: Sue Murray reported on the recent (very successful) Seniors Expo held in Braidwood. She was talking with council, in an attempt to have more activities run to bring seniors together. Cristina de Jongh (Council Community development Officer) is looking into a grant for monthly activities.

e) Library Survey is open for consultation through QPRC YourVoice at: <https://yourvoice.qprc.nsw.gov.au/>

## **2. Membership and quilt raffle**

Sue mentioned all were welcome to join the BCA and/or buy raffle tickets for the quilt.

## **3. Braidwood Common**

Braidwood Common: Annie Duke and Ben Gleeson explained the existence of the Common and its history. Ben said we were now in a transitory phase, towards a community-based model, with Commonwood Farm Inc and ex-officio management from school and BLC. Annie and Ben were bringing it up at the meeting, in an effort to move towards a shared management by collaboration between community and council to ease the burden. They saw this as a more structured way to serve the community. Ben said the walking path along creek has made a difference to a lot of people, but rates, licence and infrastructure costs were unsustainable for Ben and Annie. A proposal is being developed to put to council to develop a management plan.

## **4. Q&A session with Councillors**

Open Forum for questions and comments from the community.

Jenny Wallace stated there were no footpaths in Braidwood suitable for the elderly. Many people have walkers and scooters (and prams), and some existing paths had no curb access. Jenny offered to have councillors drive her scooter around town to experience the issues. Katrina clarified - 1. Existing footpaths unsuitable. 2. Other streets have no footpaths. She commented that council was working on a Disability Action Plan.

Janene Collins suggested shared traffic zones to slow down traffic.

Trish Sargeson suggested more visible signage at pedestrian crossings

Marilyn Mills(corner of Glenmore Rd and Kings Highway) raised an issue with the trees and vegetation management on verge bordering her property. She said falling trees had caused damage to her fence and she had to pay costs herself to fix it. She said the area was thick with thistles, ivy, blackberries, and dead falling trees. Katrina clarified Marilyn's claim that the council had been to inspect but nothing had been done. Marilyn said the area was also a fire hazard, with snakes, wasps, etc. Kenrick advised her to come along to the meeting next week with the new CEO with photos.

Michael Crosby commented more staff were needed in QPRC due to length of time to have approve DAs. Kenrick mentioned this was a huge issue for councils across the country. Regional housing flying squads were intended to be used to assess easier DAs from their homes. The council's aim of assessing DAs in 40 business days has blown out to 110 days. The delay for Michael Crosby has meant an increase in costs for building supplies and contractors. Katrina also commented that the issues with the NSW Planning Portal were causing issues for staff.

Bill Waterhouse made the point of issues with lack of communications from council. He said there was a well-known failure of council to respond to phone calls, emails, and personal attendance. He said his issue (of land sale) had taken 8 years to be approved. He asked what has been done to fix the issue. Mareeta said there was a shortage of planning staff in QPRC and across business. She agreed the system is not working and it is not good enough and will be looking at the system in an attempt to fix it. All councillors hoped the new CEO will influence the QPRC culture. Katrina said QPRC had the fastest growth in NSW but not the ability to address it. Council was looking at alternative ways to address less complex matters but commented that more staff required more funding.

Roger James asked for an update on a by-pass, and what could be done to stop the 'rat-runs' through Braidwood. Kenrick said that the council had commenced looking at a potential Braidwood by-pass. They were looking at possible routes. But in the interim, the highway is owned by Transport NSW and they need to approve anything we want to do to these roads. Any by-pass is a long way off. He also commented that whilst some residents might want measures to slow traffic on their streets, not all residents want it.

Barbara Gilby said she moved to Summerfield from Canberra two years ago. She didn't do much research prior to moving but has found her rates are much higher than she paid in Canberra for a much smaller block. She believed she was not getting value for money. She said that waste levies varied greatly across QPRC and that a footpath to the main street had been paid for by the Summerfield developer. John P said he was aware that rates were a key issue for all QPRC residents, but that current rates can't generate enough funds to run the council. Council is looking at other ways to generate funds. He also said they were looking at structural changes to get some of the funds from State and Federal Govts back to council.

Margaret Royds stated Braidwood had no storm water system. Storm water comes into Bedervale from the direction of the Men's Shed.

Gail White said that recent remedial work done on Bombay and Sandholes Rds had created a new water way through her block as the water now has no other means of escape. She had called council, who sent someone who suggested (at her expense) to dig a trench and fill it with blue metal to allow drainage. Kenrick suggested this was a perfect issue to raise at the meeting with the CEO next week.

Phillip Owen asked for an explanation of the capital costs for the new Queanbeyan council buildings versus the issues being raised at the meeting. Katrina agreed they needed a new building but not one so grand. She believed council could have consolidated all their buildings by selling them and moving to a rebuilt building on the old site. But as building has commenced it can't be stopped now. She said the lesson to be learned was about people (rate payers) having their needs met wherever they are (not just in Queanbeyan). There are legacy issues due to the council merger. John P said there was potential for the building to generate cash flow for council.

Sheelagh Noonan said neglect had filtered down from government to council levels. Sheelagh was stopped by the mediator as she veered into political territory, and the BCA is a non-political organisation.

David Anthony commented that a grant had been received for the new hall at Mongarlowe. Communities were getting together to make things happen. He asked what mechanisms council had to support groups with the application of grants?

Gilly Burke said the Anglican Hall had applied (with the Braidwood Servicemen's Club and local radio) to make it an evacuation hub. Kenrick said that big buckets of money sit with state and federal government and that council doesn't have the money to grant. Mareeta suggested they repurpose a staff member to assist groups to manage the grant process and the building of the asset. John P said this was part of the communication issue and that council had those people.

Trish Sargeson said our recent time of significant fires had people looking for refuge. The local school had all the required conveniences and asked why we couldn't go there. David Anthony responded that the school was taken away as a refuge by state government. Kenrick commented that the same happened with Bungendore library.

Bill Waterhouse enquired about the review of the s355 and locality committees and asked why council intended to drop the locality committees as they were indeed effective. Sue Murray commented that the BCA had met with other community representatives to discuss this, and had sent a submission to council. John P said there had been no decision to abolish the s355 committees, council had merely been asking what the community wanted.

John Tuckwell asked what councillors could do to make the operational plan actually happen. Mareeta advised us to be loud and make councillors aware of delays. She said councillors could be good at being pests but they needed to be told and kept updated. Katrina said that sometimes things can happen to delay or change the plans that are legitimate. Kenrick remarked that implementation of the plan is the role of the CEO.

Janene Collins brought up the issue of a lack of affordable housing. She asked could council change zoning of land so we can provide affordable housing. John P thought there were other levers to be pulled before that. Katrina commented that in Braidwood the minimum lot size was quite large due to heritage restrictions. She believed council needed to take that up with Heritage NSW. She also asked what the community wants when it comes to block size. She believed there needed to be a conversation about that. She said council were looking at options of how to sell land in Queanbeyan to provide funds to housing providers throughout QPRC.

Jenny Wallace made the comment that QPRC were doing a good job to provide a beautiful Braidwood.

## **5. Next BCA general meeting Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022**