
REPORT 5
(1215/52/IM)

ATTENDANCE AT THE GIFTING OF POU WHENUA TO HARROGATE – REPORT BACK

1. Purpose of Report

To report back on the gifting of a pou whenua to the New Zealand Gardens at the Valley Gardens at Harrogate City, Wellington's sister city.

2. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Note the letter from the Mayor, Councillors and Citizens of the Borough of Harrogate.*
- 3. Agree that a letter be sent by Mayor Kerry Prendergast to the Mayor and Councillors of the City of Harrogate referencing this report.*
- 4. Note that Air Zealand had provided sponsorship to freight the pou whenua and return airfares for Councillor Ray Ahipene-Mercer.*
- 5. Note that the Harrogate Borough Council funded the cost of in-land transfers, meals and accommodation of the delegates whilst in Harrogate.*

3. Details of the Event

Councillor Ray Ahipene-Mercer, the Cultural Wellbeing Portfolio Leader representing the Wellington City Council, and kaumatua Sam and June Jackson, representing Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, spoke at the gifting and unveiling ceremony of a pou whenua at the New Zealand Garden at Harrogate Valley Gardens. The Garden was created in the 1950s in remembrance of 23 New Zealand airmen stationed in North Yorkshire during the Second World War, all of whom lost their lives. The garden had recently

undergone a restoration and replanting scheme. The pou whenua was carved by master craftsman Rangi Hetet and gifted by Wellington City Council.

The ceremony of the ‘Rededication of the New Zealand Garden Valley Gardens Harrogate’ took place at 4.30pm on Thursday 12 August. The ceremony included the following:

- an introduction by Councillor Caroline Bayliess, member of Harrogate Borough Council and Harrogate in Bloom
- a performance from Harrogate SPARX choir of God Defend New Zealand in English and Maori
- a warm welcome by Mayor of the Borough of Harrogate, Mayor Bill Hout
- a speech by myself on behalf of Mayor Prendergast and Wellington City
- a traditional Maori blessing of the pou whenua by kaumatua Sam Jackson and myself before the unveiling of the pou.

Attendees at the ceremony included: the Mayor of Harrogate Borough Bill Hout, local Councillors, Harrogate City Choir (SPARX), members of the Golden Oldies World Cricket Festival, local residents, ex-patriot New Zealanders and Air New Zealand representatives. There were approximately 200 people in attendance.



Mayor Bill Hout



Speech by myself on behalf of Wellington City Council



Sam Jackson saying the blessing and holding the tokotoko (talking stick)



Unveiling of the pou whenua



The Mayor of Harrogate, Mayor Bill Hoults, Harrogate City Councillors, kaumatua Sam Jackson and myself

4. Report Back On Schedule of Events

The visit to Harrogate was five days in total and involved the following other events:

Thursday 12 August:

Prior to the ceremony we were taken on a tour of the Harrogate Spa Bath Museum and local Art Gallery.

Friday 13 August:

We visited the Royal Horticultural Society gardens (RHS) in Harlow Carr. The educational facility within the gardens was of particular interest. This involved interactive programmes for children to learn about plant species in addition to practical gardening expertise. Sheds with stainless steel benches were purpose built to achieve this.

The RHS also demonstrated the potential of recycled material. We were shown raised plant beds with what appeared to be 100mm x 25mm wooden frames surrounding them. These “boards” were in fact made of recycled plastic bags and tinted a wood colour. Approximately 200 bags are used to make one metre. I will pass on the details of the recycling company Marmax Products Ltd to our Parks Officers.



Recycled garden boards.

On the evening of the 13 August, the Mayor and staff held a civic dinner for us. At dinner, we were shown the City mace of Harrogate Borough Council which is the twin to the one presented to Wellington City Council in 1954.



Mayor Bill Houlton, holding the City Mace, and myself.

Saturday 14 August;

Kaumātua Sam and June Jackson and myself conducted a blessing at Stonefall Cemetery for the twenty three Royal New Zealand Air Force Personnel who died during the Battle of Britain and are buried in the cemetery.

The Bereavement Services Manager Philip Andrew from Harrogate Borough Council representing Pam Grant, Patrick and Dianne Kilburn, a representative from the War Graves Commission and ex-patriot New Zealanders were also in attendance. This ceremony was the first time that a Maori blessing had been performed and also included a reference to airmen from all Commonwealth countries who are buried at the cemetery.



Sam Jackson saying blessing at Stonefall Cemetery.



Stonefall Cemetery

Sunday 15 August:

We travelled back to London where I visited a recently installed Barclays Cycle Hire docking station. Whilst “take up” had been slow, the proponents were optimistic of the project’s eventual widespread use.

5. Material for Circulation

A letter from the Mayor of Harrogate, Mayor Bill Hoult, to Mayor Kerry Prendergast and Councillors, attachment one.

6. Benefit to Council / Elected Members

The gifting of the pou whenua strengthened cultural wellbeing both locally and internationally. The Harrogate city choir, SPARX, demonstrated cultural respect with a perfect rendition of our national anthem in Maori as well as English. There was significant interest and appreciation of the bi-cultural dimension of both the unveiling of the pou and the blessing at the Stonefall Cemetery. The event received wide-spread media coverage, focussing on the bi-cultural elements.

The visit also strengthened our sister-city relationship with Harrogate Borough Council. Our attendance and involvement resulted in significant interest from British residents who had family members either living permanently or on working holidays in New Zealand. Ex-patriot New Zealanders expressed their pride in being able to be involved in both ceremonies and all were interested to be better informed as a result of the translations that were explained by Sam and I.

The Mayor of Harrogate, staff and local politicians were very upbeat both during our formal commitments as well as the informal discussions on a wide range of subjects relating to New Zealand generally and Wellington City Council Policies.

I recommend that Mayor Prendergast sends a letter to Mayor Hoult, Councillors and staff of Harrogate Borough Council expressing our gratitude for their excellent organisation and manaakitanga (hospitality) and encourage continued dialogue to further strengthen the sister-city relationship.

7. Report Back on Costs

Air New Zealand sponsored most of the freight costs for the 75kg pou whenua and a return economy airfare. Upgrade from economy class to premium economy was cost \$2655 and was paid by Treaty Relations. Harrogate Borough Council funded the expenses incurred for in-land transfers between London and Harrogate, accommodation and meal costs for the Wellington City representatives whilst in Harrogate. Incidental costs incurred were \$530.

Contact: Councillor Ray Ahipene-Mercer