

# Protection of the Environment Trust (PoET) Management Committee Meeting Record 18 August 2020



Location:	Zoom Meeting	
Date:	18 August 2020	
Time	Started at: 2.07pm	Closed at: 2.55pm
Chair	Councillor Jane Smith	
File Ref	F2018/00732	

**Present:**

Councillor Jane Smith, Gary Murphy – Chief Executive Officer (arrived 2.13pm), Joy Cooper, Barbara Wills

**Staff present:**

Vivienne Louie – Unit Manager Financial Performance (left 2.53pm), Luke Sulkowski – Unit Manager Natural and Environmental Assets (left 2.18pm), Shane Sullivan – Unit Manager Governance and Business Services, Larry Melican – Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity (left 2.18pm), Kelly Drover – Advisory Group Support Officer

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**Item 1                    Welcome, Apologies and Acknowledgement of Country**

Apologies received: Gary Chestnut

The Chairperson, Councillor Jane Smith, declared the meeting open and completed an Acknowledgement of Country and Connection to Land statement.

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**Item 2                    Disclosure of Interest**

The Chairperson called for any declarations of interest.

No disclosures were received.

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**Item 3                    Confirmation of Previous Meeting Record and Action Log**

The Committee confirmed the Meeting Record from 26 May 2020.

The Committee discussed the Action Log, noting that all actions were listed for discussion at this meeting.

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**Item 4 Update on stand-alone website for the Trusts (Action 86)**

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Shane Sullivan (Unit Manager Governance and Business Services) provided an update on the stand-alone website for the Trusts. The website is yet to go live with the primary issue being the documentation of process required by the bank to enable us to have the donation link to place on the website.

The website should be live soon, at which point a Media Release should be sent out with a link to the website along with a reminder of the PoET Grants.

**Action:** Once the Trust website is live, staff to draft a media release which will include a link to the Trust website and a reminder about the grants program.

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**Item 5 Update on Annual Strom Talk (Action 88)**

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The Annual Strom Talk is not able to occur as planned at this stage due to COVID-19. Councillor Smith indicated she is happy to explore the option of an online event to be held later this year and will liaise with the Connected Communities team on costs and staff involvement. Councillor Smith will follow up with potential speakers.

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**Item 6 Confirmation that separating the accounts will not change current practice of the Committee (Action 84)**

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Shane Sullivan (Unit Manager Governance and Business Services) provided confirmation that separating the accounts will not change the current practice of the Committee.

The Committee is accountable for making recommendations to Council on allocation of monies in the Public Fund component of the Trust.

There is currently no Management Committee for the Trust Fund component of the Trust. The Protection of the Environment Trust Management Committee can make recommendations to Council on allocation of Trust funds. The Committee is operating within the requirements of the deed and can continue to make recommendations to Council as Trustee. In both instances, Council as Trustee makes the final determination.

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**Item 7 Update from Finance**

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Vivienne Louie (Unit Manager Financial Performance) discussed the finance reports which have split the public fund and the trust fund components. There currently aren't two separate bank accounts. Council is in the process getting another account set up however there is a delay with the bank requesting additional information.

The Committee noted that interest has decreased due to the current economic climate.

Joy Cooper raised the question of the Umina Coastal Sandplain Woodland and as the provision of \$225,000 was towards an environmental fund, should the money sit in the Trust fund and not the Public fund, as the Public fund has a tax deductibility status and they should not be receiving a tax benefit from making that donation.

The Committee thanked Viv for such a detailed and well explained report.

**Action:** Staff to investigate and provide further clarification around the \$225,000 donation, whether there was a DGR benefit and which fund the money should go into.

**Action:** Advisory Group Support Officer to prepare a thank you letter for signature of the Chair to donors to the POET.

The Committee discussed the Grants program which is funded by the Coastal Open Space System (interest on \$1.5 million). The Committee agreed with proceeding with \$60,000 for the grants program and as grants are received, making a recommendation to Council to use expenditure from the Trust fund. It is a rolling grants program and the Committee will continue to monitor expenditure.

## **Item 8 Grants Program (Standing Agenda Item)**

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*This item was brought forward and discussed at the beginning of the meeting.*

Larry Melican (Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity) advised that grants opened on 1 June 2020 and will remain open till 31 May 2021. There have been a few enquiries however at this stage there is only one partially completed application in the system.

Shane Sullivan met with Mr Robert Bell recently to discuss the resolution of the Committee regarding his grant. It was noted that this project has previously been resolved by Council.

**Action:** Advisory Group Support Officer to resend the media release on the grants program to Committee members for re-circulation.

## **Item 9 General Business and Close**

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No general business was discussed.

The meeting closed at 2.55pm

**Next Meeting:            Tuesday 10 November 2020**  
**2pm – 3pm**  
**Location TBC**