



FEATHERSTON

community centre

Annual General Meeting
10 August 2017

From the Chair

Ngā mihi nui te Paetumokai

The Featherston Community Centre was established in 1992. This was a time when many small rural towns in New Zealand were struggling to remain vibrant as a result of declining family size, increased mobility and a global shift to the urban areas.

A group of forward-thinking neighbours came together and recognised that Featherston needed a space where people could come together to support each other and help improve the social, mental and economic vitality of their town.

A trust was established to provide a space for the community and this building, which like so many buildings in town at the time was surplus to needs, was first leased and then purchased for a token amount.

I would like to recognise those people and the community who twenty-five years ago had the vision, supported the effort and helped make this building the Featherston Community Centre.

Today

The Featherston Community Centre continues to be owned and operated by a trust. We have an operating budget of approximately \$50,000 year. In general, half of this amount is raised through the very reasonable rental rates we charge our clients and the other half is raised through grants and other efforts.

Half of our expenses go towards wages for our Centre Manager, Siv, who works part-time. As is true for other ventures in life, you need money to raise money. Because of this, a good portion of Siv's time is spent making sure grant applications are complete and that our accounts in good order. In these tasks, she works closely with the Board of Trustees. I want to take this time to thank Siv for her excellent work with the Centre finances and I also want to especially thank our Board Treasurer, Graham Evans, for his tireless work in this area.

I also want to thank our numerous volunteers and businesses who provide services in-kind. I especially want to thank our volunteer Jocelyn Konig for her support in the office, Mark Shepard for organising an amazing outdoor clean-up and Alan Brook who took over from Janice in keeping the lawns mowed. If we could afford to pay you guys we would. You are amazing.

We currently have a number of volunteer positions available, including for people to help keep the office open and the phones staffed during the day. Please let us know if you are interested in helping out and becoming a bigger part of the Centre.

The Centre supports a wide range of services and activities. There is a whiteboard in the hallway that lists each day's event. Sometimes a photo of this is posted on our Facebook page.

One of my favourites was from Thursday last week. Listed were Feldenkrais, Meals on Wheels, Book Group, Feldenkrais (again!), South Wairarapa Labour Party, Relational Wairarapa and Yoga.

I can't help but think that the people who set up this Centre twenty-five years ago would be proud.

Future

The Centre has a strong community presence and has increased its role in networking and community-led development.

One example that I have been a part of is the Wairarapa Art Sale. We have now put two of these events on at the Centre. Although initially conceived of as a fundraiser, this event is also community development, as it offers new and emerging artists a chance to show and sell their work. It also has added to the flavour and vibrancy of the town and it has created new and lasting social networks.

The number of people using the Centre each month is growing. However, increased rental income could never be enough to meet our operating expenses.

We need to explore new ways to raise funds, and we need to focus on resiliency and self-sufficiency. Fund-raising is a major role for the Board and I'd like to take this opportunity to let each of you know that we are eager to explore new ideas and partnership opportunities. Please let us know if you have any good ideas.

Speaking of good ideas, we are now offering people who love the Centre the opportunity to make an online donation. We are specifically asking people to consider making an annual donation of \$25 to our Givealittle page at <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/featherstoncommunity>

Special Thanks

As Chair, I'd like to give a special thank you to each of the board members past and present. It's great working with such talented and dedicated people. It's really been a great team effort.

Thank you also to Kim Belham our Custodian who keeps the Centre clean and inviting.

Thank you to the Toy Library and all our other clients.

A special thank you to all the volunteers, including those in the office, the 25 people who helped coordinate the art sale and the businesses who supported it with money, food and raffle items, the gardeners who got down and dirty during our working bee, and Chris Miller who maintains our website.

I'd like to give a big thank you to Genesis Energy for the use of an electric vehicle for a year, complete with the Centre's logo on it.

In addition, our website lists each of our financial sponsors and many local businesses who provide in-kind services. Thank you to each and every one of them.

Finally, on behalf of the Board and our staff, I'd like to thank the communities of Featherston and South Wairarapa for your continued love and support over these past twenty-five years.

With kind regards

Emily Greenberg

Chair, Featherston Community Centre Charitable Trust