

HUTT CITY COUNCILKOMITI HAPORI AHUREA ME NGĀ RANGAPŪ  
COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, 30 Laings Road,  
Lower Hutt on

Wednesday, 26 February 2025, commencing at 2:00 pm

**PRESENT:**

Cr K Brown (Chair)	Mayor C Barry (from 2.11pm until 3.51pm)
Cr G Tupou	Cr J Briggs
Deputy Mayor T Lewis (until 3.33pm)	Cr K Morgan (Deputy Chair)
Cr C Parkin	Cr N Shaw

**APOLOGIES:** Cr G Barratt

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

A Blackshaw, Director Neighbourhoods and Communities  
 A Nelson, Head of Parks and Reserves  
 J Ransom, Head of Neighbourhood Hubs and Library Services (part meeting)  
 A Laban, Head of Assets and Facilities Management (part meeting)  
 A Moor, Head of Connected Communities  
 K Chitham, Head of Arts and Culture (part meeting)  
 I Brown, Head of Aquatics (part meeting)  
 A Quinn, Project Manager - Naenae (part meeting)  
 N Peurifoy, Leasing Coordinator (part meeting)  
 L Coe, Programmes and Innovation Manager  
 S Hughes, Programmes and Partnerships Facilitator  
 J Kilty, Democracy Advisor  
 V Gilmour, Democracy Advisor

PUBLIC BUSINESS1. OPENING FORMALITIES - KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te mea ngaro	<i>Let the strength and life force of our ancestors</i>
ki runga ki tēnā, ki tēnā o tātou	<i>Be with each and every one of us</i>
Kia mahea te hua mākihikihi	<i>Freeing our path from obstruction</i>
kia toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te aroha, toi te Reo Māori	<i>So that our words, spiritual power, love, and language are upheld;</i>
kia tūturu, ka whakamaua kia tīna! Tīna! Hui e, Tāiki e!	<i>Permanently fixed, established and understood! Forward together!</i>

## 2. APOLOGIES

RESOLVED: (Cr Brown/Cr Briggs)

**Minute No. CCPC 25101**

*"That the apology received from Cr Barratt be accepted and leave of absence be granted."*

## 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments are recorded under the item to which they relate.

Mayor Barry joined the meeting at 2.11pm.

RESOLVED: (Cr Brown/Deputy Mayor Lewis)

**Minute No. CCPC 25102**

*"That in terms of Standing Order 16.2, the time limit for public comment be extended to allow those present to speak."*

## 4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Mayor Barry declared that he was a member of the Eastbourne Sports and Services Club.

## PRECEDENCE OF BUSINESS

In accordance with Standing Order 10.4, Item 8) Assets Review – Community Halls was accorded precedence of business. The item is recorded in the order it appeared on the agenda.

5. RECOMMENDATION TO TE KAUNIHERA O TE AWA KAIRANGI COUNCIL - 25 March 2025

Hutt City Council's Cemeteries Future Focus

Speaking under public comment, **Daniel Chrisp** spoke to his written statement attached as page 12 to the minutes.

In response to questions from members, Daniel Chrisp noted that many funeral directors and members of the public were surprised by the lack of local burial options. He recognised this as a regional issue and emphasised that the ideal time for expansion was in 2016 with the construction of Taitā cemetery. He explained that public consultation was crucial and highlighted potential land options in Hutt City. While acknowledging alternative body disposal methods, he stressed that burial should always remain a viable option to respect cultural rights.

The Head of Parks and Reserves elaborated on the report.

In response to questions from a member, the Head of Parks and Reserves advised that he was unaware of any prior discussions about the cemetery expansion. He noted that there was no capacity for consultation and that Council direction was needed to prioritise this work.

In response to questions from members, the Head of Parks and Reserves advised that Akatārawa Cemetery had significant capacity for future development. He also said that pursuing an alternative approach would be costly.

Cr Parkin suggested that officers should engage with the community regarding burial options in Lower Hutt. He recognised the associated costs but pointed out that the current approach also involves rising expenses.

Mayor Barry suggested revisiting the matter as part of the next Long Term Plan (LTP).

Cr Briggs and Cr Tupou agreed that officers should be guided to consult during the next LTP process.

Deputy Mayor Lewis left the meeting at 3.33pm.

**RECOMMENDED:** (Cr Brown/Cr Briggs)

**Minute No. CCPC 25103**

*"That the Committee recommends that Council:*

- (1) receives and notes the information;*
- (2) notes potential closer alignment of services with Upper Hutt and provide guidance to officers, which will be relayed to the Hutt Valley Services Committee;*
- (3) notes the information on Council's current strategic direction on the location of cemeteries; and*
- (4) continues with the current strategic direction, and as part of deliberations, the matter would be reconsidered as part of the 2027-37 Long Term Plan."*

## 6. WHAKATUPU NGAENGAE

Memorandum dated 29 January 2025 by the Project Manager (Naenae)

Speaking under public comment, **Hakepa** advised that she had submitted a complaint regarding the lack of customer service and acknowledgment at the front desk of the Te Ngaengae Pool and Fitness Complex.

In response to a question from a member, Hakepa said that she was seeking the improvement of customer service at Te Ngaengae. She added that there had been no improvement in the two weeks following her complaint. She believed Te Ngaengae's management needed to manage the younger employees better.

The Chair invited the Head of Aquatics to respond to the public speaker's comments.

The Head of Aquatics acknowledged Hakepa's concerns and informed members that he and the Customer Service Manager at Te Ngaengae had spoken with her. He believed the young employees at the front counter and noted that her concerns about customer service had been addressed in the broader team meeting. He also mentioned that customer service workshops and training classes were available for the employees.

The Project Manager - Naenae elaborated on the memorandum.

In response to a question from a member, the Project Manager – Naenae confirmed a lessons learned workshop would be held to close the project, involving contractors, consultants, and the design team. He highlighted that a survey on parking use would be conducted with feedback from local shop owners to be considered by the Traffic Subcommittee.

**RESOLVED:** (Cr Brown/Cr Morgan)

**Minute No. CCPC 25104**

*"That the Committee:*

- (1) receives and notes the information; and*
- (2) notes the following progress that has been made on the Whakatupu Ngaengae project in the period November 2024 to January 2025:*
  - (a) Te Ngaengae Pool + Fitness opened to the public on 4 December 2024 following a dawn blessing by mana whenua, supported by community leaders, staff and students from local schools;*
  - (b) the project being within the financial allocation of the \$68M budget and the project team are in the process of closing out the project financials; and*
  - (c) works to the Walter Mildenhall Park has started on time, and a small ground-breaking ceremony is scheduled for 7 February 2025."*

7. **PROPOSAL FOR GRANTING LONG-TERM LEASES ON RESERVE LAND**

Report No. CCPC2025/1/34 by the Leasing Coordinator

Speaking under public comment, **Mike Collett, representing the Sea Cadet Association New Zealand (SCANZ)**, acknowledged the efforts of Council officers. He endorsed the officer's recommendation for a 6-year lease with two rights of renewal.

The Leasing Coordinator elaborated on the report.

**RESOLVED:** (Cr Brown/Cr Tupou)

**Minute No. CCPC 25105**

*"That the Committee:*

- (1) notes and receives the content of this report; and*
- (2) approves the granting of long-term leases to Sea Cadets Association New Zealand and the Lions Club Lower Hutt Charitable Trust."*

## 8. ASSETS REVIEW - COMMUNITY HALLS

Report No. CCPC2025/1/31 by the Head of Assets and Facilities Management

Speaking under public comment, **Hugo van Stratum, representing Hutt City Musical Theatre** (the theatre group), expressed concerns about the potential economic impact if Council took control of the hall bookings. He pointed out that the theatre group already provided valuable services by managing rentals and supporting cultural activities at Epuni Hall (the hall), which often remained underutilised. He proposed integrating Council's booking system with theirs to optimise hall usage. He noted that the proposal lacked clarity on how they could better support Council and expectations for community hall use.

In response to a question from a member, Hugo van Stratum stated that the theatre group could not take over the maintenance of the building. However, he mentioned that they ensured the hall remained clean and covered the cost of cleaning services. He confirmed that the hall was used to store equipment and that managing the booking system provides them flexibility for rehearsals and performances. He expressed his gratitude that the theatre group had the opportunity to use the hall.

Speaking under public comment, **Aaron Moore and Stephen Church, representing Maungaraki Residents Association** (the Association), said the Association engaged with Council's asset review process in March 2024 and participated in multiple discussions with Council officers. They initially understood that various options would be considered with ongoing communication throughout the process. However, they were only informed of Council's preferred option upon receiving the report. They asked for additional time to engage with the community on the proposal.

In response to questions from a member, Aaron Moore confirmed that the Association accepted the need for Council to raise prices. He confirmed that they would prefer a gradual increase.

Speaking under public comment, Shane Robinson, **representing Maungaraki School**, said the proposed changes to pricing and scheduling for Maungaraki hall would negatively impact the school's curriculum, student engagement and community involvement. He expressed concern that the rushed process had put the school in an uncomfortable position and requested more time to work with Council on sustainable options.

In response to questions from members, Shane Robinson said that they were only made aware of the proposed changes on the evening of 20 February 2025. He acknowledged that work had been occurring behind the scenes but was unaware that a decision was imminent. He confirmed that he could provide detailed information on the usage of Maungaraki Hall. He said that Maungaraki School was willing to work with Council and acknowledged that their current payment was insufficient but expressed a willingness to meet Council halfway.

Speaking under public comment, **Chris Cox, representing Hutt City Musical Theatre** (the theatre group), said the theatre group acknowledged that the current yearly payment was low and expected an increase. She believed they had not been given sufficient time to respond, having only received the memorandum on 20 February 2025. She noted that

their booking rates aligned with those charged for other halls under Council's central booking system. She expressed concern that if the booking system moved in-house, allowing anyone to reserve time slots online, it could impact their ability to organise and stage productions.

In response to questions from members, Chris Cox stated that discussions with Council would be necessary to determine how scheduling would work in a centralised system.

Speaking under public comment, **Neil Gray, representing Eastbourne Sports and Services Club** (the club), said the club also received the memorandum on 20 February 2025. While acknowledging Council's financial situation, he asked for more time to review costs and bookings in detail. He noted the club had been offered the opportunity to purchase the Community Centre around 15 years ago but declined at the time, suggesting this option was worth reconsidering. He highlighted that their bookings were made in block allocations, which did not always reflect actual usage.

In response to a question from a member, Neil Gray said that bookings were primarily made as a contingency for bad weather affecting sports activities.

The Head of Assets and Facilities Management elaborated on the report. She acknowledged public concerns about the limited time available but clarified that the report aimed to secure approval to initiate discussions.

In response to a question from a member, the Head of Assets and Facilities Management confirmed that once the Committee set the parameters, officers would start discussions with the groups to work towards a shared agreement. She added that they would report back to the Committee if an agreement could not be reached.

In response to questions from members, the Director Neighbourhoods and Communities confirmed that resourcing was sufficient to support discussions with all groups over the coming months. She outlined three different user scenarios with varying needs. She noted that the parameters for the conversations included aligning halls with the Asset Review, improving cost recovery, and optimising hall usage, and that the transition to a new arrangement would take over two years. She also highlighted that other community halls using Council's online booking system had already seen increased usage.

Mayor Barry suggested that option (a) should include 'in principle' to promote good faith discussions with community groups and demonstrate Council's intent.

Deputy Mayor Lewis, Cr Parkin and Cr Morgan acknowledged the community feedback and the officers' efforts in the engagement process.

Mayor Barry emphasised the need to address issues structured and strategically. He recognised that a comprehensive view of all halls revealed the cost inefficiencies facing the Council's facilities.



RESOLVED: (Cr Brown/Deputy Mayor Lewis)

**Minute No. CCPC 25106**

*"That the Committee:*

- (1) receives and notes the information in this report;*
- (2) notes the financial challenges Council faces in managing built and green assets into the future;*
- (3) notes the approach agreed by Council as part of the Assets Review, including optimisation of spaces and increased cost recovery, which was consulted on as part of the current Long Term Plan;*
- (4) notes this report proposes aligning management of Community Halls with this approach;*
- (5) notes community groups impacted by this proposed change have been advised and will be supported with advice to adjust their operating and funding models during a two-year transition; and*
- (6) approves, in principle, option (a) - align the management of community halls with the Assets Review to address the budget shortfall."*

## 9. NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES FOCUS AREA | PROGRAMMING

Report No. CCPC2025/1/35 by the Programmes & Innovation Manager

The Programmes and Innovation Manager elaborated on the report.

Mayor Barry left the meeting at 3.51pm.

In response to a question from a member, the Programmes and Innovation Manager stated that the high attendance numbers at the Walter Nash Hub were mainly due to sporting events.

In response to a question from a member, the Director of Neighbourhoods and Communities explained that faith-based bookings for hall rentals were currently classified at the community benefit level. She noted that the classification aligned with the criteria established as part of the Long Term Plan. She also said this approach reflected a new method of categorising activities differently..

**RESOLVED:** (Cr Brown/Cr Morgan)

**Minute No. CCPC 25107**

*"That the Committee:*

- (1) notes progress in transitioning to a coordinated, strategically aligned programme of activities to support community wellbeing;*
- (2) notes the Solus database now provides insights into programme participation, supports evidence-based decision-making for programming, and presents opportunities to expand Solus towards a singular view of Council's community activities;*
- (3) notes the Annual Plan key performance indicator to deliver at least 3000 events has already been exceeded at the end of Q2; and*
- (4) notes the upcoming Q3 and Q4 programming, including Matariki, Pasifika Language Weeks, and Youth Week, which will support underrepresented categories and incorporate sustainability elements."*

## 10. INFORMATION ITEMS

### a) Neighbourhoods and Communities Director's Report

Report No. CCPC2025/1/32 by the Director Neighbourhoods and Communities

The Director Neighbourhoods and Communities elaborated on the report.

RESOLVED: (Cr Brown/Cr Shaw)

**Minute No. CCPC 25108**

*"That the Committee receives and notes the information."*

### b) Communities, Culture and Partnerships Committee Work Programme 2025

Memorandum dated 10 February 2025 by the Democracy Advisor

RESOLVED: (Cr Brown/Cr Morgan)

**Minute No. CCPC 25109**

*"That the Forward Programme 2025 for the Communities, Culture and Partnerships Committee be received and noted."*

## 11. QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

## 12. CLOSING FORMALITIES - KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Mai te tohi rangi, ki te tohu nuku,  
Tiaho I roto, mārāma I roto,  
Tupu mauri ora ki te whai ao ki te ao  
Mārāma  
Haumi e, hui e tāiki e

Of heavenly and terrestrial  
blessings may it twinkle and shine  
within me and allow my being to  
grow out into the work of life and  
light  
Draw together!  
Affirm!

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 4.02pm.

K Brown  
CHAIR

**CONFIRMED as a true and correct record**  
**Dated this 25th day of March 2025**

**From: Daniel Chrisp**

**To: Communities, Culture and Partnerships Committee**

Firstly, I would like to thank officers for taking on what has been raised at previous meetings and taking action to produce this report. I'd like to thank Arthur Nelson, the report is well written and very thorough, with enough detail provided to give Councillor's something to consider.

This is the type of report that requires serious consideration by Councillor's, and I see it as an opportunity for Council to put right previous poor decision making and consultation.

A reminder and recap of my previous public comments

- 1. The decision to join cemetery services was done entirely behind closed doors, i have combed all previous documents and meeting minutes regarding this matter and found no evidence that residents were ever consulted, one meeting minutes stated from officers "we do not consider this matter needs public consultation"*
- 2. That when cemetery land options were investigated in the early 2000's, only council and crown owned lands were looked at, this would be considered not best practice within the industry when it comes to cemetery development, officers at the time appear to have made the decision purely based on financial motives.*
- 3. There is no clear reason found as to why Hutt City Council (HCC) ever purchased the land in Akatarawa, and therefore this should be considered a null point to consider.*

I would like to stress that as a resident and an industry advisor all I have ever wanted is 2 things.

- 1. For Council to properly consult on what is a very important decision and service to the community, to ask its residents if they are happy to merge with Akatarawa for the purpose of burials (Ashes can be easily accommodated at the existing cemeteries)*
- 2. That if residents want a Lower Hutt cemetery option for burials (which i would suggest they do given the petition) that HCC redo the work it previously did and do it thoroughly and with all due diligence, should there indeed be no good land options (or land options that are far out of reach due to cost) then continue along its track with Akatarawa. (This part of the project is costing PCC \$150k)*

Given this Agenda item I did a couple quick Facebook polls for the community and the local cemetery option instead of going to Akatarawa received widespread support. One poll with 50% support compared to 18% support for Akatarawa (over 300 respondents). The other poll received 78% support for a local cemetery vs 7% support for Akatarawa (over 100 respondents).

I would also like to reiterate points previously made for consideration of this strategic decision.

While both HCC and Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) officers are throwing out the figure of extending burial capacity at Akatarawa Cemetery for 25 years, these figures were questioned as to the calculations being inaccurate and UHCC officers ignored that questioning, I have submitted an OIA to UHCC regarding this, if both councils are putting all their eggs in one basket, they are owed to know exactly how big or small that basket is. Even if we can achieve 25 years capacity at Akatarawa Cemetery, best practice for cemetery developments is to aim for a minimum of 30 years capacity. Wellington City Council and Porirua City Council are currently aiming for at least 50 years capacity with their cemetery expansion projects.

Regarding aligning closer to UHCC with specifically the fees charged. I would caution HCC about this until they have certainty from UHCC that their officers have done a full review on their fees, with their review comparing their fees to the region, and considering the balance of offering a service vs not running at a loss.