



GREY POWER *Insight*

July 2024

Grey Power Hutt City Association

greypowerhuttcity@gmail.com

GREY POWER HUTT CITY – STILL HERE

Editorial

Our Annual General Meeting had a disappointingly low turnout for what is after all your opportunity to set the direction of our association for the coming year. It was also disappointing that we were unable to attract any new committee members to support the existing members who were re-elected unopposed. (see below for details).

Bearing in mind that GPHC is a political lobby group, and part of the wider Grey Power Federation, this begs the following:

- (1) Do you want GPHC to continue?
- (2) What do you expect from GPHC?
- (3) Do you follow the GP Federation?
- (4) Do you know what the GP Federation does?
- (5) What do you think GPHC should be doing?
- (6) Do you read the GP Fed. Magazine?
- (7) Does ANYONE read THIS newsletter?

Please write, phone or talk to any committee person on any of the above – or even something else! (see below for details).

As was detailed in the June Insight, for this association to properly function, the members must actively participate. This may be by just coming to monthly meetings, even if only occasionally; communicating ideas; contributing to discussion points (to committee or to external bodies); presenting GPHC point of view to elected officials (e.g. MPs or councils).

Dave

Your 2024— 2025 committee:

President— Pete Matcham : petematcham45@gmail.com 021 525 849

Treasurer— Valerie Wenk: vee1dub1@gmail.com 022 079 9156

Secretary— Valerie Wenk: vee1dub1@gmail.com 022 079 9156

Membership— Kevin Willis : kevinwillisnz@yahoo.co.nz 021 267 2047

Committee Members - Angelica Edgley

June speaker

Sandra Fea of Canine Friends Pet Therapy came along to our June meeting bringing her dog, Tara, with her. She explained how the idea of Canine pet therapy had been started by Eileen Curry of Lower Hutt in 1990, and that it has now grown to a nation-wide organisation of over 800 volunteers and their dogs.

Both the owners and the dogs need to be evaluated to ensure they are suitable.

The volunteers visit ICUs, hospital wards, hospices and rest homes.

Sandra told us that residents in rest homes become very attached to the dogs that visit them regularly. For some it is the highlight of their week. At the other end of the age spectrum some dogs act as reading buddies for children with reading disabilities. The dogs are happy to just listen, don't judge or laugh if the children make mistakes.

Other dogs help out at schools and on campus, helping calm student nerves.

Tara certainly made herself known and got a lot of cuddles, and I suspect some surreptitious treats when mum Sandra wasn't looking!



Upcoming meetings

We are always keen to welcome new members to join Grey Power Hutt City and attend our regular monthly meetings. Please don't hesitate to bring a family member or a friend along.

3rd Friday monthly, 10am Senior Citizens rooms, Ground Floor, Forsyth Barr Tower (on left as you enter Woolworths carpark) 45 Knights Road, Lower Hutt.

July: **Catherine Chapman**, President U3A Hutt Valley will tell us about U3A; and **Rachel Roberts** from Your Way Charitable Trust will speak about the Trust's support for people who have hearing problems or require a hearing test.

August: **Ginny Andersen**, Hutt City list MP and previous Minister for Seniors

September: **Casey Costello**, Minister for Seniors.

President's Piece



Matariki, celebrating the death and rebirth of the sun has brought in the best winter weather; cold and clear with a light Southerly, and brilliant star fields at night. Our garden has been literally buzzing, as the local bees descend en masse, competing with the Tuis to gather in a winter bonanza from the Banksia. The flowers attract other insects as well of course, and they in turn feed the fantails, silver eyes and grey warblers that we see regularly in the garden. We hadn't seen any tits around for some time though, so it was a special treat to see a male flitting to and fro nearly all week, joining in with the fantails in clearing insects caught in the webs around the eaves and in the corners of windows as well as those in the trees.



Watching the birds reminds me about the interconnectedness of everything, and that we need to look at whole of systems behaviour, not break things into bits. Unfortunately most Governments, and the current one seems worse than most, are fixated on short term symptoms rather than the hard decisions needed to correct root problems.

Their most egregiously stupid and costly move so far is of course the repeal of the Smoke Free legislation in the face of every expert opinion and popular support. Even more worrying is that apparently, the Director of Public Health was reprimanded for criticising this. The role of the Civil Service is to provide politically neutral expert advice. That must include the right to tell Ministers they are wrong without fear of recrimination.

In the same vein is the move by the Government to cut funding on the development of an integrated health information system. This is something I was working to advance when at the Ministry, and have continued to lobby for since. Quite simply, if you are taken ill when away from home, the doctor or hospital you visit can't access your health record because DHB systems don't talk to each other. At best this creates unnecessary worry for you as a patient, and unnecessary cost to the country.

At worst it could lead to you being given inappropriate treatment. Developing an integrated system so your records can be accessed wherever and whenever needed makes perfect sense economically and socially. It saves you worry and the country money at every point, so why on earth did anyone think stopping it to finance tax cuts was a good idea?

Looking at the positives, full marks once again to our local MP Chris Bishop for his work in trying to return house prices to affordable levels. It will be no surprise that I agree addressing supply side is crucial. What that doesn't mean though, is that we need more 'Granny flats', nor loosening of already inadequate building standards to allow more poorly designed, uninsulated and inefficiently heated 'wooden tents' to be built. The way to produce high quality homes at minimum cost is well known, and used by all major developers – standardisation. Reducing cost further comes down to mass production and certainty of demand. This needs Government level finance and cross party support. It will be interesting to see if Chris can persuade his colleagues and coalition partners of this! The other factor of course is the price of land.

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Chris' move to designate 30 years supply of land is an excellent start but needs to be matched with financial measures to ensure houses are built. A good start would be a punitive tax on undeveloped land, and empty properties.

Overall the fundamental changes needed to ensure houses are seen as homes, not an investment; may be a hard sell for this Government.

Kia Kaha, Keep safe,

Pete Matcham

President

New President for Grey Power Federation



Gayle Chambers from Blenheim was elected as our new National President at last month's Federation AGM

Gayle says that her vision for Grey Power is for an organisation that is "... working towards our seniors having the right to a life that isn't fraught with difficulties, such as financial difficulty, medical difficulty, transport difficulty. We [older people] don't need all the bells and whistles, [but] we

are entitled to a life where we get up in the morning and are not depressed. We are looking at a demographic of people who, most of them, have worked all their lives and worked very hard to have what they've got [but] Seniors without a 'nest egg' to fall back on found life on the pension very difficult". "If you take a person who has not been able to own a home or is not mortgage-free, the pension is inadequate and there's lots of people out there like that". "I consider it a real privilege to be voted in," she said of the two-year term, adding it was "exciting, challenging and scary" at the same time, and that she thinks she would know in 18 months if her vision is working and whether she is a benefit to the Grey Power Federation board.

Gayle has also got straight into work with the following press release.

Grey Power says urgent action needed to deliver pay equity for care and support workers

Grey Power is calling on the Government to fully fund a pay equity settlement for 65,000 care and support of workers in the wake of today's nationwide rallies.

Grey Power President Gayle Chambers said care and support workers provided many older New Zealanders with the support they need to live in dignity and to enjoy a rewarding, safe and sustainable quality of life.

"Hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders and their families benefit from the work of care and support workers, which has been historically undervalued because it is work carried out predominantly by women. "It's time the value of their work was fairly recognised in the pay equity settlement that has been in train for two years. We are calling on Health Minister Shane Reti to follow in the footsteps of the previous National Government to commit to funding the pay equity settlement. (Continued on next page)

“It’s been proven that care and support workers are being paid less than their skills, experience and level of responsibility warrant. All that’s required for this inequality to be fixed, is for the Government to set aside funding from their Budget contingency.

“Without a settlement, low pay and lack of recognition will see more workers leave a sector which is already struggling, making it harder for older New Zealanders to receive the care and support they need. “Grey Power urges the Government to heed the message delivered by today’s rallies and do the right thing for care and support workers and the older New Zealanders they look after every day,” said Gayle Chambers.

Gayle Chambers Grey Power President 021 053 8707



Ever driven past this unassuming building and wondered what was inside?.Well, I used to, then my curiosity got to me and I stopped recently. and I was surprised by the amazing contents

Alicetown is home to Forage Merchants of Wellington - an old school retail store with a focus on the best the Wellington region has to offer. Apart from great coffee - you can pick up fresh bread, eggs and milk as well as a wide range of artisan

food products – from a range of local producers that you may not have seen before - plus much more.

From olives and cheese and locally made milks, to chutneys, sauces, chocolate and pastries supporting local producers has never been more easy or enjoyable.

It’s a great place for a gift, some basic essentials or something delicious to treat yourself. The Shed within Forage is a great place to grab a coffee and a pastry and sit in the rustic warmth. It’s also home to much more than just food products. Have a rummage you never know what you might find!

Open 7 Days. 46 Victoria St Alicetown - pop in and meet Guy or give him a call on 0274 666 674



p.s. Good coffee too

On the left that’s Guy on the right



Paid advertisement

A SHORT TRIP TO ANDALUSIA



The flight to Malaga from Italy was about 3 hours so not so bad, but unlike the long distance flight the cabin was hot and I'd wished I had worn my sandals. Usually I opt for an aisle seat, but ended by a window, did not see the Alps but we flew over Nice, Marseilles and the rest of the Côte d'Azur. Coming into Malaga there was a wonderful view of the Sierra Nevada, there was even some snow on the mountains.

We did a Cook's tour of Malaga and came to the hotel. This was advertised as 4 stars - maybe 25 - 30 years ago! It looked very tired. Still the room was clean, but with only 1 plug it was a nightmare when you have a tablet, a phone and a toothbrush each to plug in.

The tour had us staying at the same hotel each night. It was lovely not having to pack each night but it meant there was a lot of travel going to and from our destination that day. I think I saw every olive tree in Spain in the process.



Our first trip was to Ronda a very old city in the mountains. The old part of the city is built on a hill with the only access via a bridge. We went to the bullring which did not interest me that much, the guide spent an hour talking about bullfighting. I was glad I understand so little German.

Afterwards we went over the bridge into the old city. It is so beautiful. There are so many cobbled streets you would not imagine and very hard on the feet. On the way home we came by Mijas, I was expecting to see pigs eating among the oak trees but instead there was a view and shops. Never mind. There are so many olive trees you would not believe. I am wondering how they pick them and get the labour.

It was so hot that I was making days a 1 ice cream day, a 2 ice cream day or a 3 ice cream day. Cordoba was definitely a 3 ice cream day.

The Mesquita, in Cordoba is a cathedral which was a mosque is absolutely superb. It is such an unprepossessing building from the outside with no windows. Inside it is marvellous with all the columns of the old mosque but inserted in the middle a church. It was really my favourite place.



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The Mesquita

Most of these old towns have Jewish quarters and it was fascinating wandering round all the old alleys.

On our trip to Gibraltar, it was by itself with the buildings point, the most southerly part, a gale. But it was good to see photo of the African coast. photo.



amazing to see the “Rock” just sitting around the bottom. We went to Europa it was so windy, really like Wellington in the Med meet the Atlantic. I also took a They were a bit hazy but I still got a

We went up the “rock,” not all up high. We were all waiting could learn to charge for photos they could make a fortune.

the way, and Gibraltar looks better from to see monkeys and saw two. If they

I had English chips for lunch, they are much better at California in the Hutt, still it was good.

Coming back we had an hour at Marbella. There are only high end brand shops to look at and I was really not interested.

In Seville it was again very hot, 32 so definitely a 3 ice cream day.

The thing that made the most impact on me was the huge gold altar backdrop in the cathedral. I’m afraid all I could think of was all the people in Central and South America who had been murdered for the gold. It took the enjoyment out of it.



Our last outing was to Granada and the Al Hambra. I don’t know if I saw so much in a short time but I was not as impressed. Perhaps because we were in a group we did not see as much of the gardens as if we had gone privately. There was a bed of sweet peas, which were beautiful.

All in all it was a delightful few days away.

Valerie Wenk

My late father was often asked, "What do you do now that you're retired?"

"Well, I'm fortunate to have a chemical engineering background, and one of the things I enjoy most is turning beer, wine, Scotch, and margaritas into urine."

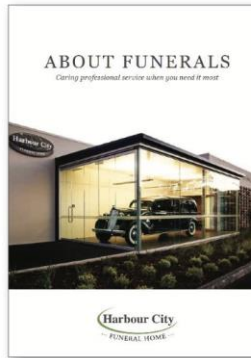
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ABOUT FUNERALS

Informative
FREE guide

This beautifully designed booklet contains answers to all the immediate questions family and friends will want to know at the time of a funeral. Colour photographs throughout, make this an easy to read comprehensive booklet, as the perfect guide to pre-planning a funeral. Included are sections for recording personal details and funeral preferences that can be retained for future use, making funeral planning easy for your loved ones. Call us now for a **FREE** copy of this guide, while stocks are available.



Call Brad McAneney on

570 0111



Caring Funeral Professionals
Members of The Funeral Directors
Association of New Zealand



We thank Brad McAneney from Harbour City Funeral Home for his sponsorship of our newsletter.

Senior Strength & Conditioning

You know how important exercise is, as we grow older. Here are a few suggestions. I start by standing and, with a 2 kilo potato sack in each hand, extend my arms straight out to my sides and hold them there as long as I can.

After a few weeks, I moved up to 5 kilo potato sacks, then 25 kilo potato sacks and finally I got to where I could lift a 50 kilo potato sack in each hand and hold my arms straight out for more than a full minute!

Next, I started putting a few potatoes IN the sacks, but I would caution you not to overdo it at this level.

The Pasta Sauce Hailed as the World's Best Is Surprisingly Easy to Make at Home



One of Marcella Hazan's most famous recipes is also the simplest. Her pasta sauce only requires three ingredients and takes less than an hour.

First, the ingredients. You'll need 800gm of whole, peeled tomatoes (fresh or tinned); one peeled, halved onion; and 5 tablespoons of butter. You'll also want a pinch or two of salt.

Put everything together in a single pot and set it to simmer over medium heat on the stove for 45 minutes, uncovered. Give it the occasional stir.

And that's it. After the 45 minutes is up, toss out the onion halves, and pour the sauce over your favorite pasta. Easy. This recipe is just proof that great cooking doesn't always have to be complicated.

Hutt City Council Representation review

The statutory panel set up to review how our councillors are elected has now reported back. The overarching requirement for the review is to achieve equality of representation - population to councillor ratio has to be within 10% of the average for all wards, whilst avoiding splitting 'communities of interest'. The review achieves this ratio with the exception of Wainuiomata, where the 'community of interest' rule is considered to be paramount. In summary, the proposed changes are to:

- Reduce the number of Councillors elected at-large from 6 to 5
- Disestablish the Eastern Ward
- Reduce the size of the Harbour Ward
- Reduce the size of the Western Ward
- Increase the size of the Central Ward and have two Councillors for the Ward.
- Increase the size of the Northern Ward and have two Councillors for the Ward.
- Add the Mana Kairangi ki Tai Māori Ward electing 1 Māori Ward councillor
- Disestablish the Community Boards in Petone, Wainuiomata and Eastbourne.

(The extra councillors for Central and Northern wards are obtained by dropping one 'at large' councillor and the disestablishment of the Eastern ward)

As an organisation, Hutt City Grey Power has always advocated for equality of representation and so in principle supports the proposals. We will be making a submission on the review, and would welcome any thoughts or suggestions from members. We have also always advocated for a better and more inclusive representation than Community Boards. So, as part of our submission I would like us to suggest better ways for people in all wards to have an effective voice in what Council does and how they do it.

Please send any comments or suggestion to me at petematcham45@gmail.com

Public feedback on the representation review closes on 1 August.

If you want to make a submission as an individual you can do so by email haveyoursay@huttcity.govt.nz or through the council web site.

Lower Hutt City Summit

Your committee has been invited to participate in an upcoming Lower Hutt City Summit, scheduled for 18 September 2024 and run by the City Council. This event will bring together people from across our community to discuss and shape the future of our city.

The summit will feature insightful keynote speakers, interactive sessions, and will mark the launch of engagement of Tō Tātou Tāone 2055 / Our City 2055 – a future-focused strategy for our city. We will of course be putting forward the principles of Age Friendly Cities as the basics on which to build any future vision.

Please let me or any committee member know of any ideas that you think would help to make our city a more interesting and vibrant place to live and that appeals to all ages.

Pete Matcham

2024 FEDERATION AGM.

Pete Matcham and I, Kevin Willis, were our representatives.

The meeting opened at 9AM on Tuesday, 18 June with the National Anthem, Housekeeping matters and the welcoming address by Acting President, David Marshall. David said there are more new benefits for members pending, the Constitution is being updated as required by new legislation and the current Constitution is hindering the works of the Board. The Board and Conference would like to have a Wellington based CEO. However, before this can happen, our membership will have to be increased and more sponsorship will be required.

The Acting Treasurer, Lew Findlay, presented the Financial Accounts. These showed a deficit for the year of \$7360 and Accumulated funds of \$764,193. This year's budget shows a surplus of \$610. It allows for capitation fees of \$301K and magazine postage of \$200K. Lew is doing a great job in keeping financial matters under control and was appointed Treasurer unopposed.

Our first guest, Sharnie Warren, CEO of Grey Power Electricity (GPE) then spoke. She said that there are about 20K members who are customers of GPE. They have paid Grey Power commission of about \$300K over the last year which has helped to keep our subscriptions down.

The new Constitution was then discussed. This was accepted by the meeting. A template of the Federation's Constitution will be made available to all Associations. Work is being done to get the Federation registered as a charity. The main benefit of this is to avoid having to pay tax and people who make donation will be able to claim back part of their donation.

Some National Advisory Group (NAG) reports were then discussed. One of the reports covered renewing Drivers Licences for people who are 75 and over. A big problem with this is that there is not a standardised procedure. Fed Office is very concerned about this and taking action.

Our logo is the owl. However, there are many different versions of this and the board is wishing for all Associations to use one only. We have our own in Hutt City. A new owl logo is current being drawn. All Assns will be asked to comment on it and it will become the national logo when approved.

Some people have home cleaning etc paid for by the government. In some cases the person scheduled to do this work does not turn up and the person expecting the help, does not get advised that they will not receive the help when expected. Grey Power is going to advocate for major improvement to this system.

There is also concern about the number of people who are booked in for an operation and it does not proceed even when they have been admitted to the hospital. Sometimes these people are from out of town and have incurred expensive travel costs. There was a case mentioned where a patient pressed their bell many times and they did not get any attention for 24 hours. GP is advocating for improvements to the health system.

We were encouraged to report all scams to the Police so they are aware of them.

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Membership – 10 Assns have increased their membership by over 75 in the last year. They have done this by holding seminars, leaving newsletters at libraries, supermarkets etc and advertising what they have done for the community.

Some have done a project. One, Palmerston North, asked the City Council to provide free parking for Gold Card holders between 9 and 10AM. This was later extended to 11AM, Noon and then 3PM. The card holder was charged \$10PA and given a card to display in their car. GP PN received publicity and new members from this.

Others have had a manned info desk at a supermarket.

Carolyn Cooper the Aged Care Commissioner spoke. They receive about 20 complaints a day. The Commission spends a lot of time on Housing matters, Health and Disability advocacy work and improving health and disability support for older people. One of the problems they deal with is that people cannot leave hospital because their landlord will not make modifications to allow them to continue to live in their flat etc.

The election took place for a new National President. This was won by Gayle Chambers from Blenheim. Gayle has a background in working for mainly Red Cross and other non profits. Gayle received 76 votes. Raymond Mudford also stood. He has been a businessman from Hamilton and received 12 votes.

Karen Billings-Jensen CEO of Age Concern then spoke. Because of the housing crisis, Age Concern is supporting a new system, called Homeshare where people 65+ share accommodation. This system helps people with housing, connection and support. A prototype is currently being tested in Auckland. Other things Age Concern is working on include

- Housing and Urban design
- Improving incomes and reducing the Cost of Living
- Health Services and access to them
- Reducing loneliness and improving social connection Elder Abuse

In NZ the fastest growing group are those over 85.

40% of old people live on their pension only

20% have only a little more than the pension

66% of retired people own their own property

25% of people over 65 are still working

In 2022 ACC received 165K claims from people 65+ who had falls

REMITTS – There were several Board remits considered which don't matter much to us so I will not go into them.

There was a remit from Golden Bay that asks the Board to respond much quicker to policy statements from government etc. This was passed by 47 votes to 28.

Remit from Howick/Pakuranga was - that we urge the government to adopt English as an official language. Only Māori and sign language are official languages in NZ. Passed 57 to 19.

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From Waitakere – that GP requests the Ministry of Internal Affairs to allow only publicly controlled pyrotechnic displays for the safety of all people and pets. Passed 69 to 8.

From Tauranga – that Federation evaluates the potential benefits of lobbying all Territorial Authorities and/or Govt to ensure that a simple Rates Postponement Scheme is available to all ratepayers 65 and over. (This is available in Hutt City, but not everywhere.) Passed 56 for to 19

From Waitakere – That GP Federation contacts the Ministry of Health with regard to the provision of free prostate testing for men up to 80 years and done on a bi-annually and funded by health NZ. Passed 74 to 4.

From Nelson – that GP Federation work with government Agencies to continue to make provision for individuals who are not digitally able or capable. (eg forms in hard copy to still be available.) Passed 82 to 0.

From Kapiti - That, in light of the fact that the primary Grey Power objective is to advocate on behalf of its members, the GP Board gives priority to evaluating the pros and cons of establishing a permanent presence in Wellington, and that the membership be informed of the results and recommendations of their investigation no later than the 2025 AGM. Passed 64 to 4.

I enjoyed attending this AGM. Next year's Conference is to be held at the same venue – Brentwood Hotel, Kilbirnie on 10 to 12 June. It was agreed last year to alternate the venue between the north and south islands but this is too costly.

Kevin Willis 30/6/24

Free \$2000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance for all members

One of the least know benefits for all members of Grey Power is the \$2,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit provided through American Income Life Insurance Company (AIL).

It is an automatic membership benefit of belonging to Grey Power, you don't have to apply. You don't even have to contact AIL at all, but if you would like a certificate of coverage you can have an AIL representative deliver this to you, and explain additional insurance coverage available. To arrange a visit, please visit the website

<https://www.ailnz.co.nz/request> or contact Mario Soljan directly at

Mario.Soljan@ailnz.co.nz Phone: (09) 973 5254



A.M. Best, one of the oldest and most respected insurance ratings companies, has rated American Income Life as A Excellent for overall Financial Strength (as of 8/23).