

President's Report – September 2020

The main focus of my report last year was the decision that the committee had made to continue to hire these rooms for the next two years with the expectation that this would probably roll over to another term. Sadly we are back in the position of having to look at whether we can do that or whether we once again have to find a new home.

Before I go into that, I will review other aspects of the year. It has been 16 months since the last AGM and that was one of the significant decisions we made last year. At the beginning of this meeting we ratified the minutes of the SGM that we held in December of last year to bring the constitution of the club up to date.

Bill Morris took over the role of Director of Whare Flat and, along with the very large group of volunteers who make our festival work, made a huge profit setting us up well to move into this year. We didn't manage to have a Waimate Festival this year for obvious reasons.

Most of the business at committee meetings has dealt with the upkeep of this venue and how we could improve it and you will have seen that over this year we have changed the sound system, had a sign made and put up outside the building, and improved the lighting. Sam is in charge of maintenance of the club and along with others who help, he has been managing ongoing issues of basement flooding, borer and various electrical problems.

Unfortunately Covid 19 came along which meant that we had to go into recess for some time whilst the bills still had to be paid. Although that has been difficult for the club, what this has shown us is the terrific support we have amongst our members. People have been amazing at giving us donations and I would like to publicly extend my thanks to Swing Riot (who decided to pay rent for the whole time they could not operate) the musicians who have donated their services to the club so that we receive the total income for clubnights and the other donations that we receive spontaneously from our members.

This brings me back to my opening paragraph. Before Covid hit we spoke with the landlord about continuing at this venue. He advised us that he planned on increasing our rent by \$500/month (we currently pay around \$2000/month) with a 10% increase upon each lease renewal. He believed this was a good deal and was not prepared to negotiate. As a committee, we do not think this is manageable for us as we are already eating into our capital each year and it is only the success of the festival that keeps us buoyant. Right now we cannot rely on the festival, as at any point a change in alert level could mean the cancellation of this event.

So, our expectation is that at the beginning of next year we will have to start hunting for a new venue so keep your eyes and ears open and let us know of any possibilities. It had been my intention to step down from President this year but with our current position I have agreed to restand so that someone new does not have to deal with this uncertainty.

Finally, I would once again, like to extend a thank-you to all the people who keep the club running on a daily and weekly basis. The many volunteers who step in to keep clubnights running along with the committee who do a sterling job doing anything that looks like it

needs doing. After many, many years of service to the club Mike is standing down. He has done almost every job on the committee but in recent years has produced the weekly newsletter for us and stepped in as treasurer when Kathryn took over the role of club administrator. He now wants a rest so we thought it was time we let him do that.

So please join me in thanking everyone, especially Mike.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernadette Berry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Bernadette Berry.
President