

POKENO COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting of Pokeno Community Committee held at 7.30 pm at Pokeno Hall on Monday 04 May 2026

Present

Allen Grainger (Chair), Helen Clotworthy, Prince Kaira (Deputy Chair), Ginny Bullock (Secretary), Jay Singh, Lynda Spicer (Treasurer), Sarah Baker, Rick Barber, Janet Baillie, Dhanak Hamayun

Councillors: Vern Reeve, Fabio Rodrigues, Peter Thompson, Endine Dixon-Harris

Visitors: Will Gauntlett (WDC), Liz Saunders (WDC), Sen Sergeant Noel Foster (NZ Police), various members of the public

Apologies

Mayor Aksel Bech

Bronwyn Heath

Moved: Janet Baillie

Seconded: Ginny Bullock

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that as per last meeting, it will be live streamed and can be watched online.

Confirmation of Status of Agenda

Moved Allen Grainger

Seconded Ginny Bullock

Confirmation of previous minutes 02 December 2025

Moved Allen Grainger

Seconded Janet Baillie

Disclosures of interest

The register of disclosures of interests is no longer included on agendas but PCC members still have a duty to disclose any interests under this item to the Chairman

CORRESPONDENCE

In: Various emails from WDC forwarded by Ginny Bullock to all committee members.

PUBLIC FORUM

- Weeds are rampant all over Pokeno which is really bad as we are the Gateway to Waikato. Upkeep is supposed to be monthly but that is definitely not happening as weeds are now growing out of the roundabout at Pokeno Road and Great South Road.

- The on/off ramps have weeds that are over knee high, even though some local people have been there to try and maintain them which puts them in danger from traffic. Waka Kotahi only looks after land from the bridge and WDC and Auckland Council do not seem interested in taking responsibility.
- Rubbish in the town centre is still bad with bins overflowing

Pokeno Community Emergency Response report:

- Ian Leader gave an update on the recent cyclone.
- The plan was activated and all systems worked well. Active liaison with other CER groups under the guidance from Civil Defence based at WDC in Ngaruawahia took place.
- They make all the decisions regarding the deployment of resources.
- These are not made at a local level. It is a huge area stretching from Tuakau out to Mangatawhiri, Mercer and Onewhero.
- Main advice from the group is that if at all possible:
 - 1 - Stay at home
 - 2 - Stay with neighbours
 - 3 - Go to local Welfare centre as advised on Facebook
- A Facebook page to be created with links to WDC and PCC.

Police Update (Verbal)

- A report was given by Sen Sergeant Noel Foster regarding Pokeno and surrounding areas. This is regarded by police as quite a quiet area with fluid staff movements.
- Constable Sid is due to retire at the end of the month meaning that Pokeno does not have a Community Constable.
- Main problems in Pokeno are shop lifting and more recently fuel thefts. The dead goats on Ridge Road were shot, not killed by dogs,
- Pokeno is regarded as a slow speed area. Car thefts have reduced as various responsible groups have been caught.
- The Sergeant did emphasise that various Vietnamese organised crime groups (mainly) are buying/renting houses and building cannabis factories. Clues to look out for are high power usage, windows/curtains always drawn, no constant movement in and out, perhaps weekly, little vehicular activity.
- A brief discussion took place regarding recent gunshots heard near Pokeno. It was explained that duck shooting starts on the first weekend in May and goes for 6 weeks so shots will be heard at dawn and dusk during this period.
- It was advised to always dial 111 in an emergency or 105 for other police reports. Crimestoppers has its place but complainants do not leave names/addresses so it is difficult to follow up on these reports.
- The Sergeant left his email address and phone number for those of the public who need to talk to him personally (Noel.foster@police.govt.nz)

REPORTS

Roading

- Allen Wilkinson and Paul McPherson from WDC updated the meeting regarding road in the Pokeno area. They showed update on footpath for Dean Road/Fraser Road and roundabout but these are in the planning stage at this stage due to financial constraints.
- Munro Road is due to be upgraded (still) and they are looking at raising the service to enable cabling, drains etc to be built. Roundabout is also planned at the intersection with Pokeno Road. All on hold due to lack of funding.
- Bridge on Pokeno Road still has 20 years of “life” left so upgrade is in the longterm plan. However the protective panels on each side will be removed to make for room. A footpath is going to be built shortly for safety so that children can cross to school.
- All plans will be made to “shovel ready” subject to NZTA funding

Adoption of Standing Orders

- Elizabeth Saunders (WDC) explained these to the meeting. They are already in place but some updates are now needed and more updates will be coming later this year. After some explanation, Allen Grainger said that this should be taken away until PCC can discuss it further.
- Main points are: 1 - Having meetings via Zoom, 2 - The Chair should have a casting vote, and 3 - The process for moving motions.
- The Committee will receive the report for this meeting and confirm their decision at the next meeting.

Councillor’s report (Tabled)

Cr Fabio Rodrigues

Over the past six weeks, Council has been working intensively through the Long-Term Plan Core Services workshops, going line by line through every activity to cut waste, drive efficiencies, and make sure ratepayers are actually getting value for the money they put in.

This has meant challenging long-standing assumptions, questioning spending that doesn’t deliver for communities, and pushing for a more disciplined, transparent approach to how Council operates.

We also held the Council meeting to consider the proposed budget position for the 2026/27 Annual Plan. The vote was 13–1. I voted against the proposal because of the impact on rates and the ongoing gap between what people are paying and the level of service they receive.

Councillor Reeve voted in favour, expressing his view that the plan aligns with community needs and expectations. The final decision on the rates strike will be made at the end of June.

Today, we also met to discuss open space across the district. This work is currently in the public-excluded section, so I am limited in what I can report, but the focus is on ensuring our fast-growing communities have the right mix of parks, reserves, and recreational spaces, and that these assets are managed responsibly.

Across all of this work, one thing is clear: Council is shifting toward being more transparent, more efficient, and more responsive to the communities it serves. The foundations are now in place for a more community-centred approach to decision-making and delivery, and I look forward to continuing this work with you over the coming months.

A discussion took place as to why Fabio voted against the WDC budget of the Annual Plan and how this would affect any rate rise. A question was raised as to how Fabio would cover WDC expenditure if there is no rates increase and where he thought the funds would come from

A question was also raised regarding the huge increase in the cost of living and whether the rates increase will be put on hold by Council. Committee was advised that costs for 2026 were set in the Annual Plan in 2025 so there will be no changes. The Long Term Plan this year will be based on affordability and will hear the voice of the community

Could we have a breakdown of where rates go to.

Cr Vern Reeve (Verbal)

Vern advised the committee that in order to save some funds, he and Fabio are travelling together to meetings in Ngaruawahia. Doing this saves about \$12000 per year in mileage costs

He said how pleased he is that the pathway on Pokeno Road is going ahead at long last after about 3-4 years lobbying

Financial report

- Lynda Spicer advised that there has been no change to the balances since the last meeting.
- Helen Clotworthy advised that the balances are \$8252.76 for the business account and \$3015.94 for the savings account.
- Lynda has been in touch with Council regarding the grant to local committees/boards and why Pokeno has not received this for two years. She is awaiting a response

Communications

- Helen advised that the website needs modernising and updating. Asked if anyone could help with this or knows someone who could help as the usual person has gone to Australia.

Security Cameras

- All 3 cameras are now installed. Camera at Site 1 on Market Street intersection is not working yet as WDC is waiting Counties Power to finish installation of cable, but those at the Pokeno Road roundabout and at Helenslee Road by the motorway are up and running.
- Installation of the centralised server in Ngaruawahia is underway and is expected to be completed by June 2026.
- Programming and livening the video feed to the centralised server in Ngaruawahia is upcoming as is connecting the new cameras to the V-Grid platform via Safer Cities.

Skate Park/Destination Playground

- Some money is held by council but there will still be a shortfall of approximately \$350000 so fundraising will be required. Contractor is being sourced.

Co-opt of new PCC member

- At a separate meeting, it was unanimously agreed that a new member should be co-opted to replace Haupai Montgomery who has resigned. A nomination form was received for Amanda Rutherford (Nominated by: Allen Grainger; Seconded by: Ginny Bullock) which was received at the meeting.
- The Senior Democracy Advisor confirmed that the co-opting of a new member needs to be resolved at the public meeting. It was confirmed there were no other nominations for the Committee.
- The Committee voted unanimously to co-opt Amanda Rutherford as a new member.

Moved Allen Grainger

Seconded Ginny Bullock

NEIGHBOURING COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports for this meeting.

Upcoming events

- Successful Fun Run help recently
- High Tea for Mothers' Day on Sunday 11 May at 10 am – 2 pm in the Hall. \$10 per person in conjunction with Crafty Cows market.
- Sri Lanka Day 06 June 10 am – 2 pm. Free at the Hall

KEY WORKS PROGRAMMES - Will Gauntlett

Capital Works Programme

- Details can be found on the WDC website including LTP consultations.
- Will advised that most of Capital Works had previously been discussed earlier. Plans for Community Hub have been completed and a contractor is being sourced.
- Antenno app use is encouraged for council business

The following questions were tabled by Allen Grainger for future consideration and response by Council:

1. Can the Council advise that of the rates received from Pokeno area, how much is returned to the Community and in what capacity;
2. Can the PCC have a report on the volume of traffic using the Main Street of Pokeno;
3. A traffic scaling report is required to ascertain that the projected new route diverting heavy traffic from the Main Street, around Hitchen Road, Gateway Park Drive and McDonald Road. Report would ascertain the proposed new route can take the type of traffic/volume mentioned;
4. A review of the placement of rubbish bins within the Main Street of Pokeno;
5. Maintenance of berms at roundabout at Pokeno Road still not being done regularly (see above);
6. That in conjunction with the PCC the Council investigates the selling of the Pokeno Hall and land, so that a multi-purpose Community Centre could be funded and built at the Sports Park on Munro Road;
7. 7 In the new Pokeno West sub-division, Council advised the developer that they should decrease the amount of retail space they wanted to provide. Who sat on the meeting where this was decided and why was the decision made;
8. What is happening with the gazebo which is being considered for Hitchen Road. This is going to be self funded and PCC wonders why it is taking so long.

Dhanak

Helen Clotworthy advised that PCC member Dhanak has been invited to Cannes to show her designs. There is a raffle of \$100 per ticket to help with her expenses and the prize is an outfit designed by Dhanak. Committee gave her all good wishes for the trip.

Meeting closed at 9.25 pm

MEETING DATES 2026

Monday 15 June 2026

Monday 03 August 2026

Monday 14 September 2026

Monday 26 October 2026

Monday 07 December 2026