

Community Meeting re Membership

27 May 2023

Participants: Justine, Julica, Crow, Rob, Elizabeth, Mark G, Leah, Zen, James, Callum, Christina, Marty, Coco, Koa, Lilyana

Minutes: Anna Du Chesne

Meeting started: 9.30am

Discussion about adult children of members:

How can (adult) children of a current member shift into membership?

Transferring a site from parent to child

A few previous examples of site shares being transferred from parents to children were discussed, including - Ted Smyth (site near Larry's) and Verity (site next to the Tennock's)

Points of importance for many of the people present included:

- length of time child has lived on site
- cost associated with paying the joining fee
- request to bypass a step in the membership process that involves listing the names of (the agreed-upon number of) Goolies met and "what you have learnt from them".

Additional questions were raised:

- Kempsey Council/ DA – states there is a maximum number of people allowed to live on Goolawah. Clarification sought – maximum number of shares, rather than people?
- How many can live on a single site?
- How many can live on the community?

Questions that require further discussion:

- How do we define **living here** and being active part of the community?
- Does the community need to determine a set length of time a child of a member has lived on Goolawah that is sufficient to be considered eligible to by-pass (full) membership process?

Ideal scenario

Zen was asked to share his "ideal scenario" for transition into full membership. He would prefer to not have to pay a joining fee or pass through a membership process to be active (i.e. able to vote).

Zen added that he was totally okay to participate in meetings, work bees and social events on the pathway to becoming a member.

Further discussion of the membership process took place including parts of the process the group agreed were important elements for all members:

- Attendance of general meetings
- Participation in working bees
- Engaging in social function

Members present suggested that a willingness to participate in these group events is an important part of being an active member of the community. It was also acknowledged that many have different ways of engaging and have personalities (shy or solitary) that will have different expressions of engagement (i.e. individual projects rather than group social functions).

Costs associated with membership:

The group discussed the financial impact of joining fees – on the child of the member and on the community.

The preference for many was that the adult child **should not** have to pay the joining fee. However, it was also acknowledged that not paying joining fees might have a financial impact on the

community. The joining fees are a core revenue for the community that is used for insurance and other essentials.

Some in the group believed adult children **should pay** the joining fee. Reasons included the financial impact on the community if they didn't. The 'value' of Goolawah and an appreciation of paying joining fees as an energy exchange was also raised.

Some misunderstandings about who pays a joining fee were also discussed.

Clarification: a person who joins an existing member does not pay another joining fee. The first member (shareholder) pays the joining fee and the second member (joint member) does not.

Clarify fees:

Joining fee (\$10,000) – paid to the community following share transfer – the one-off fee is the sum of all annual levies since inception in 2000. (capped at \$10,000)

Share capital (\$7000) – sum transferred to previous share owner at share transfer stage

Purchase price (\$???) – sum agreed upon and paid to previous shareholder; community is not party to this negotiation or agreement

Different status of membership

A request was made to review the membership categories and definitions currently in use.

- **Member** is a person who holds a site title/ share
- **Prospective** member is a person working through the process of applying for membership
- **Eligible member** is a person who has been voted in by the community and looking for a site share purchase
- **Joint member** – up to two people can be signatories to a site
- **Guest of a member**
- **Adult child of a member**

The group discussed membership and site ownership, and that the two are tied together

- membership = voting rights
- there is one vote per member/or joint members

Discussion about the possibility of different tiers of membership i.e. should we have non-voting members?

Types of adult children

1. adult child has lived here since birth (*has never moved away?*)
2. adult child has lived on Goolawah (*for X number of years*), is living/ has lived off-site and returns
3. adult child has never lived on Goolawah, is living off-site and plans to move here

Children currently living on Goolawah:

- if child has grown up on Goolawah, from birth to (undetermined) age, they could/should be exempt from the (full) membership process
- discussion about the need (of the child) to complete the step where prospective members must meet community members and share what they have learnt.
- feeling is these children already know the community as they had had interactions with members for most of their lives
- questions about what an appropriate/ ok length of time is away from the community before the adult child no longer knows who is in the community due to new members arriving and old members departing
- adult children (at 18 years old), as well as younger teenagers, can and are welcome to participate in meetings and other community events

Adult child has lived on Goolawah (moved away and may return)

- strong sense that these children should be able to bypass the membership process
- Rob expressed his concern about Izumi having to go through the membership process, particularly the meeting 45 members and reporting on what was learnt. Izumi grew up on Goolawah and knows most of the current members.
- discussion about the length of time away from the community – how long is too long away?
- how can adult children living away be encouraged to keep in contact and up to date with Goolawah? Read the newsletter???

Joint shareholders

Discussion about individual cases of members present at the meeting and their adult children, some discussed making their children joint shareholders:

- Mark G raised the possibility of making Leon a joint member of his site.
- Rob also raised his desire to make Izumi a joint member of his site.

The adult child would still have to process through membership; however, they would complete a slimmed-down version (i.e. not have to meet 45 members of the community)

Long term discussion

There was an acknowledgement that this is a long-term issue that needs broad discussion across the community. Most of the group present agreed that amendments and additions to policy are not urgent and as a community, we will need to reflect on how we want to support the functioning, nurturing and stability of our families, living on Goolawah or living away from Goolawah.

Flexible approach

Many in the group also supported an individual approach, where the community could have broad guidelines that could be flexible, to meet the needs of the individual child, the family, and the community.

Questions re these suggestions of flexibility

Some suggested a flexible approach will need to have a solid foundation such as in the membership steps including:

- police check
- engagement with the community via social events, working bees and/or meetings
- a vote/ no vote

The group agreed that engagement in our community-based meetings/ events is an important part of living on Goolawah – it makes us a community.

Proposal for discussion at the next GM

OPTION 1: Joint member process (adult child)

If the member with the adult child chooses to make their adult child a joint member of their site:

The adult child would:

- bypass meeting number of people section of the membership process, as they have long history at Goolawah.
- be required to attend GMs, social events, working bees and submit a police check.
- bypass the vote process

OPTION 2a: Transfer of membership (from departing member to adult child)

If the member departs Goolawah and gives up their membership to their adult child (who has lived on Goolawah for X years*)

The adult child (who has lived on Goolawah for X years)

- bypass meeting number of people section of the membership process, as they have long history at Goolawah.
- be required to attend GMs, social events, working bees and submit a police check.
- bypass the vote process

Need to determine length of time of engagement with Goolawah

- e.g. lived more than 5 years ?? at this stage **no length of time to be included**

Clarify

*for children who have grown up here

*child returns to care for aging adult

OPTION 2b: Transfer of membership (from departing member to adult child)

If the member departs Goolawah and gives up their membership to their adult child (who has lived on Goolawah for X years*)

The adult child (who has lived on Goolawah for X years)

- bypass meeting number of people section of the membership process, as they have long history at Goolawah.
- be required to attend GMs, social events, working bees and submit a police check.
- **be voted in**

OPTION 3a: Additional share

If the adult child of a member wants to purchase a share not in their parents' name.

The adult child (who has lived on Goolawah for X years) and wants to buy a separate share.

- bypass meeting number of people section of the membership process, as they have long history at Goolawah.
- be required to attend GMs, social events, working bees and submit a police check.
- bypass the vote process

Need to determine payment of joining fee

a. pay joining fee **OR**

b. not pay joining fee

OPTION 3b: Additional share

If the adult child of a member wants to purchase a share not in their parents' name.

The adult child (who has lived on Goolawah for X years) and wants to buy a separate share.

- bypass meeting number of people section of the membership process, as they have long history at Goolawah.
- be required to attend GMs, social events, working bees and submit a police check.
- **be voted in**

OPTION 4: Membership process – no change

If the member departs Goolawah and gives up their membership to their adult child (who has **never** lived on Goolawah)

Membership process would proceed as it would be for normal eligibility, with no exception for adult child of members who have never lived on Goolawah.

OPTION 5: Flexibility Clause

Add the following clause to any new policy amendment:

The community acknowledges its ability to waive any part of the membership process based on an individual aspect of request/ need; dependent on 2/3s majority vote from community

Meeting closed: 11.30am