

Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū
Banks Peninsula Community Board
MINUTES ATTACHMENTS

Date: Monday 22 June 2020
Time: 10am
Venue: Little River Boardroom
4238 Christchurch-Akaroa Road, Little River

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ID 43678 Little River Play and Recreation development

It is with significant concern and extreme disappointment that I am writing to you in my capacity as Secretary/Project Co-ordinator of the Little River Wairewa Community Trust: *We the residents of little River speak with one voice on this issue.*

For almost a decade the Community groups of Little River (including but not limited to The Little River Wairewa Community Trust, Little River Village Planning Committee, The Little River Railway Station Trust Little River School, Little River Play Centre and the Awa iti Domain Board) have been consulting, campaigning and making submissions to Christchurch City Council Long Term and Annual Planning processes to address a range of issues impacting on the children and families of Little River and surrounding communities.

As a Community we have spent considerable time formulating ideas, attending meeting after meeting and submitting year after year impassioned pleas to Council. In 2016 the Little River Big Ideas document was formulated as the culmination of these years of campaigning and planning, it captured the vision of the community and identified a playground area and recreation facilities for Youth and Children and our drainage issues as the key priorities for our community. In 2018 after years of disappointment and deferrals, we were advised that we had been successful in submission and that the playground was to receive a significant upgrade and funding had been allocated in the 2020 Annual Plan.

Hence it was with sincere shock and utter frustration, that we learned last week, via Jane Harrison Community Development Advisor for Banks Peninsula Akaroa Wairewa, that the \$209 000 funding allocated for construction of the Little River Playground project, (funding due to be released next month – July 2020) has without notice been summarily withdrawn.

Beside from a few pieces of play equipment at Birdlings Flat and Duvauchelle Campground (which are difficult to access in Summer Season) the closest alternative proper full playground for children, is in Akaroa almost 30 kilometers and half an hour's drive away. The only alternative being Haswell Domain a further 45.7 kilometers away. It is neither fair nor reasonable that Peninsula ratepayers and their families are expected to continue to be deprived basic community facilities and are needing to make such significant journeys just to access play equipment and playground facilities. For many children and families this is financially not an option as the cost of petrol is entirely prohibitive.

It is hard for the ratepayers of Little River not to feel extremely let down and disillusioned that our playground, just weeks before work was due to start, has now suddenly without any discussion or consultation been yet again deferred. Whilst we are mindful that Council funding is under pressure post Covid, many residents are angry and upset that yet again the need and wants of families on the peninsula are being ignored.

According to Council's website, Christchurch itself boasts more than 300 outdoor children's playgrounds 500 neighbourhood parks, 50 heritage parks (not including regional and sports parks) yet the children of the Banks Peninsula are being neglected and forgotten. This playground was just one of a range of initiatives our community have been fighting with for years, we accept other infrastructure projects in the Little River Big Ideas Planning may need to be deferred but this playground is and has always remained the number one priority for locals.

Presently the area available to all children and youth comprises of a baby swing (for under 2 year olds) and a toddler slide. This needs to be urgently addressed. For a community of over 1000 residents and as the gateway town to Banks Peninsula, which receives hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, it is grossly inadequate.

The design is completed and is ready to go out for final community endorsement. This playground is 'shovel ready' and was the catalyst project on which the Village precinct planning hinges. The benefits to be derived are far more consequential than simply community wellbeing. The business owners and residents of Little River Village were relying on it provided a much needed boost to the local economy, as it was to significantly elevate the Goods Shed, Café and playground precinct into a tourism and recreation destination.

This playground was never just envisioned for the community that have been working so hard in partnership with the council to deliver this project, it was always envisioned as a desperately needed public amenity to service thousands of Christchurch residents who visit Little River and the Banks Peninsula every year. Little River is the gateway to Christchurch's jewel in the crown, the Banks Peninsula. We appeal to Council to reconsider the allocation and deferment of the critical funding needed to realise this vision. Considerable resources and man hours have been expended in the planning and design phases of this project. We appeal please reinstate the funding that CCC had

budgeted to spend on this playground and let us finish this project together that has been almost 10 years in the making.

The Little River Wairewa Community Trust has voted this week to contribute \$10,000 towards the playground completion. But these funds are only available in 2020 playground build option. If the project is deferred, the funds will be spent on another of the Trusts projects, no longer available to contribute to the playground.