

Waihoru
Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote Community Board
MINUTES ATTACHMENTS

Date: Thursday 12 March 2026
Time: 4.01 pm
Venue: Linwood Boardroom, Gate B,
180 Smith Street, Woolston

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Acknowledging and Celebrating the Cultural Heritage of Te Rae Kura/Redcliffs

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Date: 17 January 2026

Executive Summary

Te Rae Kura/Redcliffs contains two sites of vast historical significance in the human settlement of this region, and Aotearoa New Zealand. These are places of ancestral occupation and spiritual significance to local Māori, and should be a source of pride to all New Zealanders. However, the importance of these sites is barely acknowledged and the mana of their previous occupants has been diminished.

The Redcliffs Residents Association wishes to help address this by drawing the attention of the Christchurch City Council and the Waihoru Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote Community Board to the information on the two caves and the recommendations made for their enhancement in the [2014 Main Road Master Plan](#).

The Association has resolved to make a formal application to the Christchurch City Council, via the Community Board, for the Council to commence a process of acknowledging and memorializing these important cultural sites in line with the Master Plan recommendations.

Historical Context and Cultural Significance

Within Te Rae Kura/Redcliffs there are two of the most important historical sites across all of Aotearoa. The two caves are Te Ana o Hineraki/Moa Point Cave and Moncks Cave - the latter being a Historic Place Category 1 designated site.

Te Ana o Hineraki provided shelter for some of the earliest people to arrive in Aotearoa; its occupation ascribed to the Waitaha ancestors of Ngāi Tahu. Its occupation dates back as far as the mid-late 14th century and was part of an extensive significant village site across Redcliffs Flat. The area was rich in resources, from the forests of the Port Hills, to the wider Ihutai Estuary mahinga kai (resource and food gathering area), to the open oceans beyond. Later, the area formed a key route for Ngāi Tahu travelling between settlements at Tuahiwi, Banks Peninsula and places further south.

Te Ana o Hineraki originally consisted of three chambers, the biggest of which was over 30 metres long. This was reduced as result of roadworks and extensive excavation by European settlers in the late 19th century.

Numerous archaeological surveys of the caves and nearby areas have been conducted from as early as 1872, and the sites continue to have significant value for scientific understanding of the early occupation of the area. Moa bones and egg shells, along with bones of seals, whales, birds and fish, shellfish and many Māori taonga/artefacts, were discovered and removed from the caves. A burial was recorded within the cave during the 19th century, and further burials were encountered during excavations in 1873 close to Te Ana o Hineraki, on land that is now classified as Red Zone and under control of the Christchurch City Council. This urupā is currently fenced with a simple three wire farming fence.

Moncks Cave was a similarly early occupation site, containing unique artefacts not found elsewhere, and the surrounding area has clear evidence on ongoing occupation over the several centuries from initial occupation. The cave is listed as a Historic Place Category 1 on Heritage Zealand Pouhere Taonga's heritage list, recognising its importance.

The early archaeological excavations in Te Rae Kura were central to the fledgeling field of archaeology in Aotearoa New Zealand, and played a significant role in the history of science in this country. The artefacts and material unearthed formed the base of the Canterbury Museum collection, and helped to establish scientific understanding of the nature and diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand's past bird life and extinction events, and have helped to identify previously unknown extinct species.

The two caves, and wider Te Rae Kura area, have played a significant role in the story of human settlement in Aotearoa. They are places of ancestral occupation and spiritual significance to local Māori, and should be a source of pride to all New Zealanders. However, the importance of these sites, and the mana of the Waitaha people's occupation in Te Rae Kura, has been diminished by development of the city over generations.

The Canterbury Earthquakes and Main Road Master Plan

Both Te Ana o Hineraki and Moncks Cave were accessible to the public until the 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquake sequence. The earthquakes caused significant damage across Te Rae Kura/Redcliffs, and both caves were subsequently closed due to the risk of rockfall.

The [Main Road Master Plan](#) was developed by the Christchurch City Council in 2014 as a blueprint for the post-quake recovery of Te Rae Kura/Redcliffs area.

The Main Road Master Plan states (page 51):

Te Ana O Hineraki / Moa Bone Point Cave is one of the most significant geological, cultural and historic sites along the corridor and indeed in the city. However, due to rockfall issues it has been difficult to access. It has been treated in isolation from the adjacent reserve at Te Rae Kura / Redcliffs Park, and has also become dominated by the road corridor and as a result is little more than a passing feature for traffic along Main Road.

The Master Plan included a number of actions and concepts to acknowledge the significance of this area, including (pages 51-52):

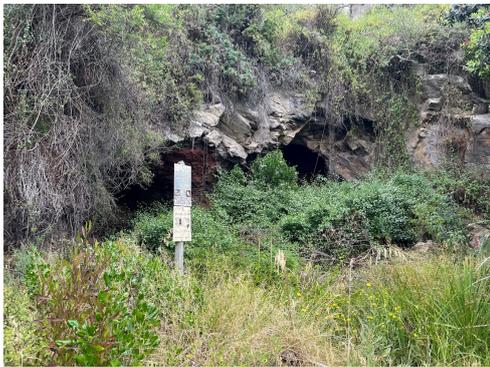
- Introducing interpretive material about the cave's history and significance.
- Marking out the former extent of the cave chamber on the ground.
- Visually linking the cave with the Te Rae Kura/Redcliffs Park, Ihutai/Avon-Heathcote Estuary and the Coastal Pathway.
- And, crucially, working alongside mana whenua and Ngāi Tahu artists to ensure any initiatives reflect the cultural associations and values Ngāi Tahu hold for this area.

The Current State

The two caves remain fenced off since the earthquakes. There has been an accumulation of weed shrubs and litter behind these fences, with the view to the caves themselves now greatly obscured. There is also no acknowledgement of the significance of the caves at the sites, or any of the cultural interpretations proposed in the Main Road Master Plan. In the words of one local resident, it feels like these caves have been shamefully abandoned.



Te Ana o Hineraki in December 2025



Moncks Cave in December 2025

The Redcliffs Residents Association hosted a public meeting in 2025 for Redcliffs residents at which experienced archaeologist Tristan Wadsworth presented his work on the new Redcliffs Primary School site and its findings. It was attended by over 60 people, illustrating the local interest in this work and the pre-European history of Redcliffs village.

Both Redcliffs Primary School and the Moa Kids Community Early Learning Centre now incorporate aspects of the area's significance into their teaching of local children.

A Proposal for a Phased Restoration of Mana to Te Rae Kura Sites

The Redcliffs Residents Association wishes to draw the attention of the Christchurch City Council and the Waihoru Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote Community Board to the information on the two caves and the recommendations made for their enhancement in the [2014 Main Road Master Plan](#), which we urge both staff and elected representatives to read. Now, more than a decade on, it is clear that these have been set aside or ignored.

The Association has resolved to make a formal application to the Christchurch City Council, via the Community Board, for the Council to commence a process of acknowledging and memorializing these important cultural sites in line with the Master Plan recommendations. However, we propose starting with some modest steps as an expression of commitment.

Our proposal is as follows:

Phase 1: Initially, and without delay

1. Clear the weeds, scrub and small trees obscuring the view of the cave entrances.
2. At Te Ana o Hineraki change the fence alignment by introducing a 'dog leg' to create a set- back for pedestrian viewing of the cave without blocking passage along the foot path.
3. Remove some of the large boulders from in front of this cave's entrance, where appropriate. If their purpose is to provide a barrier then incorporate strengthened material in the lower part of the set back fence.
4. Place interpretative panels at the two cave fences explaining their significance. Ideally these would link via QR code to richer information on the history of occupation at these sites.

Phase 2: As a next step within the year

1. Investigate with Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke and Ngāi Tūāhuriri a landscape and cultural interpretation plan for the two caves, including the selection of an appropriate name for Moncks Cave.
2. Take advice on the best protection of the urupā site.
3. Consider a small roofed structure housing a fuller description of the settlement of Te Rae Kura by Waitaha. Ideally located along the Coastal Pathway - possibly on a seaward facing section of Beachville Road

Phase 3: As budget allows in later years

1. Investigate the possibility of a permanent visitor experience building located on Te Papa Kura Redcliffs Park (the old Redcliffs School site), adjacent to Te Ana o Hineraki. This could provide audio visual information on the village, its people, and taonga.

Public Forum - Richard Tilbury

Flooding issues - Images

12 March 2026







