

## Vehicles on Wonga Beach Community Group Meeting

Date: Wednesday 15 September 2021

Time: 5:30pm to 6:30pm

Venue: Wonga Beach State School – Resource Room

Attendees: Sara Roberts (Douglas Shire Council)  
Gaye Scott (Douglas Shire Council)  
Two Wonga Beach residents  
One Elder, Traditional Owner

Apologies: Six apologies received.

### Meeting Notes

1 Meeting was chaired by Gaye Scott who welcomed everyone and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

#### 2 **Terms of Reference (TORs)**

The TORs were discussed. There were a few minor changes agreed to fix repetitive phrases and grammar. The main changes to the Draft were to the Membership and Operation section.

##### Membership Section:

When nominations were called, 16 people responded. One has since opted out and two people own property in Wonga but live outside the shire so it's not practical for them to attend meetings. There are currently 12 members who are residents, plus two from Council and one Traditional Owner.

We agreed 12 members was a workable number but while we have good representation in the northern section of Wonga, there's just one member who lives in the south. We will call for two more people to join the group who live in the southern section.

##### Operation

There was discussion about the process to follow when a member cannot attend a meeting and they want to send someone on their behalf. There's the option of simply notifying the Chair of the change or having to get approval for the proposed person.

The attendees were happy with simply notifying the chair, but one member who could not attend, had indicated prior to the meeting that any substitute should be approved. Both options are contained in the TORs and will be discussed at the next meeting. A copy of the amended Terms of Reference is attached.

#### 3 **Sharing Information with the wider Wonga Beach Community**

Publish record of meeting on Webpage; One community member to post link to Council page on the Wonga Beach Notice Board Facebook Page.

#### 4 **Assistance with Monitoring Turtles**

It was raised that when monitoring turtle nesting, or perhaps doing beach clean ups, assistance from permit holders who are willing to use their vehicle would be very helpful. It was agreed that when Traditional Owners were planning on monitoring, they contact Council who could put the call out to permit holders.

#### 5 **Workshop for Permit Holders**

It was suggested a workshop could be arranged for permit holders to learn more about the environment and the animal life as more knowledge may help to minimise environmental damage. Similarly, a driver safety workshop could be offered.

## **6 Information & Education**

There are people living at caravan parks in Wonga Beach who drive ATVs and/or side by sides on the beach. It was suggested information sheets be supplied to the owners/managers of the Parks to distribute to visitors and if not in place already, have signs indicating all vehicles must turn right. The information sheets would clearly spell out in the conditions which much be adhered to which are:

- Driving on hard packed sand only along a corridor between 5 and 15 metres below HAT within a two-hour limit of low tide
- Vehicles to be driven in a direct line only to reach the destination. No reckless driving across the sand.
- Driving during the daylight hours only
- Drivers to take note of diversions in place to protect sensitive areas when necessary, such as turtles nesting.

This is one the management actions included in the Wonga Beach Foreshore Management Plan (page 22).

*“Undertake a community awareness program, including mailouts to ATV users and foreshore signs informing of appropriate speeds and environmental impacts of ATV use on the beach and the region's values, information to be provided at campgrounds and tourist-related businesses.”*

## **7 Illegal Access Points**

Vehicles are using a track near the traffic barrier near the culvert on the northern end of Marlin Drive to access the beach. This has been noted and Council will look at ways to stop this from occurring.

## **8 Grace Period Over**

The grace period is now over and all residents who want to drive vehicles on Wonga Beach must have a permit and display the pink sticker on their vehicle/s. Local laws officers will be do random beach patrols to issue warnings and/or fines. Application forms can be downloaded from Council's website and at this stage permits are free.

## **9 Ratepayers vs Residents**

Currently only residents are eligible to apply for a permit. Prompted by an application for a permit from a ratepayer who owns property in Wonga Beach, but lives elsewhere, the question was posed to the group as to whether Wonga Beach ratepayers should be eligible.

The consensus at the meeting was to allow ratepayers with property in Wonga Beach, to apply for a permit.

## **10 Gate at Boat Ramp**

Council installed a gate at the entrance to the boat ramp in response to reports of 4WDs using this track to access the beach. Prior to the gate being installed, a security camera collected data over several months. A review of vehicle registrations indicated most were non-residents. At present the gate is not locked and the proposal is to issue a key or pin pad code to those residents wanting to launch boats. We asked people what they thought.

The consensus at the meeting was for the gate to remain, and it was a good idea for boat owners to have key or pin pad code. It was suggested reflectors be attached to both sides of the gate to make it more visible at night.

## **11 Selection of Chair**

Attendees were happy for Gaye Scott to remain as Chair for the time being.

Meeting closed at 6:30pm.