

# Motueka Valley Association Newsletter

The River, The Land, The People

December 2025

Hakihea 2025



## Seasons Greetings



And a warm welcome to this, the last MVA Newsletter for 2025. It has been a mixed year for many of us with some misfortune and, hopefully, some joy. Through it all the resilience of Valley residents has been inspiring and the help and support of neighbours and the wider community simply amazing! With the worst behind us we can hopefully look forward to a well earned break and the company of family and friends over the holidays. To those of you who are still recovering, we wish you the best possible Christmas and a speedy return to normality in 2026.

The Ngātimoti Reserve Community Rooms will be open from 10am on Christmas morning for an informal drop in and lunch. The BBQ will be going and there will be pétanque and other games. Bring sun protection, food, drink, and folding chairs if you have them. **Everyone Welcome!**

*Merry Christmas and All the Best in '26*

### *Festive Quiz*



1. Who wrote A Christmas Carol?
2. How many reindeer does Santa Claus have?
3. Name 3 of them.
4. Which country donates a Christmas tree to London's Trafalgar Square every year?
5. Which single record has sold more copies than any other worldwide?
6. Which group wrote and sang Fairytale in New York?
7. Which country did traditional Christmas mince pies originate in?
8. How many ladies were dancing in the 12 Days of Christmas?
9. Who wrote How the Grinch Stole Christmas?
10. Which country did the tradition of having a Christmas tree originate in?

# New beginnings at the Graham Downs Community Farm



**Greg and Claire, along with their children Silvanis and Althea, have been joined by two other couples and their hard work, dedication, and positive energy have contributed enormously to the practical progress and the renewed spirit of the place. Greg writes**

It has been a busy year: we've welcomed a new baby, brought in new stock, removed mountains of rubbish and scrap, and upgraded three houses so that they are cozy and habitable again. A large communal garden has also taken shape, becoming a steady gathering place for shared labour, connection to the land, and good conversation.

We've been fortunate to connect with many neighbours whose encouragement, practical help, and goodwill have meant a great deal to us, and we're deeply grateful for the sense of belonging and support that the valley has extended.

There is still heaps of work ahead. Years of deferred maintenance mean the tidy-up continues, fencing needs rebuilding, water systems need attention, and various houses and outbuildings will be slowly restored. Large sections of the property are also burdened by rampant old man's beard and other well-established invasive species, which are long-term challenges we intend to face with patience, realism, and primarily organic management methods wherever feasible.

We are deeply grateful to the trustees of the Renaissance Community Trust for the incredible opportunity to carry the torch forward as contemporary community builders. Community isn't the easiest path; it asks a lot of us. But when done well, we know it can be profoundly rewarding and a powerful force for positive change.

Together we've been learning from the hard lessons of the past and developing the long-absent "invisible structures" that most successful intentional communities rely on: these include a shared vision and clear membership agreements and will give the clarity, security, and stability that were previously missing. We are still guided by the founding vision of Graham Downs - to cooperatively farm the land, look after one another, and provide food for both residents and the wider community.

To help bring fresh energy to the farm and share the inspiration of community life, we'll be hosting a small summer gathering—part camp, part extended creative working bee—offering a gentle introduction to the joys and realities of communal living. Anyone local who would like to participate is warmly invited to reach out, especially if you have skills or gifts to share through a demonstration, presentation, or small workshop. We hope to include scything sessions, renovation and earth-building experiments, orchard and garden projects, communication practices, and more.

Whether you're curious about supporting in small ways, interested in learning about our "resident participant" pathway, or—if especially community-minded and excited by the vision—keen to explore future co-founding roles, we'd be delighted to hear from you. We're also eager to tap into the valley's practical wisdom. Anyone with knowledge of old Massey Fergusons (or classic tractors in general) is warmly welcomed to give us a crash course on the quirks and care our old machines require!

We warmly welcome visits, but by prior arrangement only. Please email us to arrange a suitable time.

Graham Downs Community Farm Seed Pod group contact: [grahamdownsfarm@gmail.com](mailto:grahamdownsfarm@gmail.com)

Renaissance Trust contact: [www.renaissancecommunitytrust.com](http://www.renaissancecommunitytrust.com)

**MVA MEETINGS ARE AT 7PM ON THE 2nd THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH (Excl. January)  
PLEASE COME ALONG - 10th December, 12th February, 12th March**

# Ngātimoti Recreational Reserve

The Ngātimoti Recreational Reserve, next to Ngātimoti School, is owned by TDC. The building is leased to FENZ but the Community Room and the grounds are administered by the local committee. TDC contractors mow the grass and clean the outside toilet, the grounds and gardens are 'maintained' by the committee, and the Community Room is cleaned by users, with intermittent deep-cleans.

Bookings for the Community Room (with commercial kitchen) can be made by contacting Sarah on 022 199 1964. A koha is requested for local community events. For "commercial" events there is a charge of \$1 per hour per person. Regular yoga and Te Reo classes, and a variety of meetings (including MVA) and celebrations are held there.

The Reserve is well-used recreational area:

- The Bike arena (pump track and bike jumps) was established many years ago and its usage goes in phases depending on local interest in maintaining and using the facility.
- A Paa Harakeke has been established on the southern boundary so flax weavers can harvest high quality harakeke for their work.
- The public barbeque area outside cannot be booked and is available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- A pétanque court is open for use - bring your own balls.
- The latest proposal is to develop a Community Food Forest on the Reserve. This project is to create a largely self-sufficient, regenerative Community Food Forest and will be led by Joel Briffault (Crafted Earth). Further information on this project will be available in this newsletter and MVA Facebook.

If you are interested in contributing ideas or actions to the committee, please email [ngatimotireserve@gmail.com](mailto:ngatimotireserve@gmail.com)



## Did you know we have 4 Automated External Defibrillators (AED) located in the Motueka Valley?

Let me introduce myself, my name is Gloria Anderson and I am the Chairperson of the Motueka Valley Defibrillator Group, which is a registered charity.

A brief history ... about 12 years ago (or longer) a Valley member had a visitor who had symptoms of a heart attack. An ambulance was called and fortunately the person was not having a heart attack. The ambulance crew did suggest that there should be an AED available here in the valley which could, in fact, save a life if it was used in an emergency.

The idea of purchasing an AED was brought to the Pokororo Women's Club and they fundraised in the community and purchased 2 AEDs thanks to the generosity of the community. These AEDs are in public locations so that when needed they can be uplifted by a community member or even the general public

travelling through the valley as they are listed on the app AED Locations which you can add to your phone and can be found on whichever source to download apps.

Over the years, after purchasing our two AEDs, members of the community felt that we should have more as the 2 we had were located on the East Bank. We now have 2 more and they are on the West Bank. We fundraised again and received grants from Tasman District Council, Network Tasman, Ngātimoti School Festival Committee, and various generous community members. They are strategically located for members of the community to be able to reach them within a reasonable time frame in order to try to save someone's life before an ambulance or helicopter can reach them.

We currently have only 3 of us on the committee and a few volunteers in the community that will check on the AEDs on a regular basis. These life saving devices need batteries changed every five years, pads changed every two years or after being used and the life of the AED itself is approximately 10 years. Sometimes, like any mechanical device, things need additional maintenance which incurs a charge.

Not to bore you too much ... we are very lucky to have 4 AEDs available in our community and can possibly save your life, the life of a loved one, or your next door neighbour. The current committee would like to find someone else to take over the upkeep, maintenance, and fundraising, etc. for this project.

The AEDs are located at the Pokororo Hall, corner of Graham Valley & Motueka River West Bank Road Four Foot Lodge, 1216 Motueka River West Bank Road, the Ngātimoti Community Rooms (Fire Station), and Woodstock Automotive 1982 Dovedale Road.

If you have any questions or can help in any way please contact me at [ja.ga.kiwi@gmail.com](mailto:ja.ga.kiwi@gmail.com) or my mobile 021 179 7005.

## St. James Church

Family Services are held on the 3rd Sunday each month and everyone is welcome

### **Upcoming Service Dates:**

Sunday 21st December 10.30am

Christmas Eve Carol Service

Monday 24th December 7.30pm

Sunday 18th January 10.30am

Sunday 15th February 10.30am

Sunday Services include Children's Sunday School and morning tea



Best wishes and Blessings for Christmas and the New Year

## Update on Valley restoration projects

**GRAHAM VALLEY ROAD TO FLORA CAR PARK** – The road is jointly managed by DOC and TDC who are finalising finance options (more than a million dollars may be required) before they can tender for a contractor. There is a very mobile cliff on the right of the slip as you go up the hill and this is depositing material into the river and affecting the flow. Given that the government may not support the repair of natural hazard damage in the future they are working on a design that will provide long-term resilience. An additional issue is the shortage of large rocks in the area, and these will have to be quarried before work can begin. DOC's Motueka office confirm they are "pushing as hard as we can" for this work. In the meantime the road remains closed (with access for residents only) and DOC ask for people to stay safe and respect the closure.

**MOTUEKA VALLEY HIGHWAY OUTSIDE RIVERHAVEN** – In mid-November TDC were still hoping to have the work completed before Christmas but have been delayed by the non- availability of specialised contractors (who are busy elsewhere) and the shortage of suitable large rocks. As far as the TDC is concerned the road is open and there is no need for any local businesses to remain closed.

**POKORORO SWINGBRIDGE** - The bridge has been fully assessed by TDC’s Structural Engineers and a detailed design and schedule of rates prepared for pricing. Council is currently seeking out suitably qualified providers to carry out the repair work early in the new year. The bridge will have an improved stay cable design so, once complete, it should be a lot less lively when crossing and a lot less prone to being caught during flooding events.

**WEST BANK ROAD BETWEEN BATON BRIDGE AND POKORORO** – TDC acknowledge the magnitude of the storm damage and are working through design solutions for further action early in the new year. Repairs to the slip outside Pokororo Hall are scheduled for completion in January when the crews return from their break.

**PILES OF MUD AND SILT ON THE ROADSIDE** – These are slowly being cleared and TDC are looking for alternative sites for the debris which remains at the freedom camping area near Bluff Bridge.

**CYCLE TRAIL** – Works are currently being undertaken on the riverside section between Pokororo swingbridge and Peninsula Bridge although this will not be fully functional until the swingbridge, allowing access from the West Bank, is reopened. There are concerns that riverbank erosion is threatening the trail in some areas.

**RIVERS** – At a recent Rivercare meeting TDC confirmed that

- a) they are responsible for maintaining the stopbanks on Rivers X (below Peach Island/Woodman’s Corner) and substantial investment in these over the past 5 years protected Motueka town from serious damage;
- b) they are responsible for “erosion management” on Rivers Y (from Peach Island/Woodman’s Corner to the Graham Valley);
- c) erosion management is achieved through:
  - planting and maintaining the riparian corridor – 6,500 willows (not crack willows) were planted in Tasman this year and more will follow;
  - rock protection where there is a significant risk to people or infrastructure – as at Riverhaven and now downstream of the Pokororo swingbridge; and
  - managing gravels – this generated considerable debate with TDC stating that 19-30mm gravel was not very useful/valuable and that anyone wanting to extract gravel should approach TDC although there are national RMA restrictions on how much can be removed
- d) stopbanks on Rivers Y were not owned or maintained by the Council, and landowners must obtain consent from the Council before modifying existing stopbanks or constructing new ones – several landowners insisted that they had been told they “could do whatever was necessary to protect their property” and were unhappy that they were now being told this was not the case

Further information on TDC’s approach to river Management is available at <https://www.tasman.govt.nz/my-region/environment/environmental-management/water/river-water-quality/river-management>

## LOCAL COMMUNITY HALLS AND AEDs

### Ngātimoti Community Rooms - AED

Next to Fire Station  
Sarah Bradshaw 526 8026

### Ngātimoti Memorial Hall – no AED

Corner of Valley Highway and Waiwhero Rd  
Bex Douglas 021 173 1279 / [ngatimoti.hall@gmail.com](mailto:ngatimoti.hall@gmail.com)

### Pokororo Hall – AED

Corner of West Bank Road and Graham Valley  
Sylvia Arnold 526 8282

### Woodstock Automotive - AED

1982 Dovedale Road Woodstock Junction  
Kerry Hall 543 3884

### AED also available at Four Foot Lodge

1216 Motueka River Westbank Road, Krista & Wilfred de Blauw 526 8776

# Classic Kiwi Christmas Cake

This is a deliciously moist cake packed with fruit. The listed ingredients make a large, 23cm cake or four 12cm ones that make good gifts. I copied the basic recipe some time last century, the original may have been an Alison Holst creation however I've modified it over the years. Enjoy!

Ingredients: 500gms sultanas  
250gms rasins  
250gms currants or sweetened dried cranberries (I use a mixture)  
225gms butter  
430-450gm can of crushed pineapple (in juice)  
50gms glacé mixed peel  
3 cups of high grade flour  
1/2 tsp each of vanilla, almond and lemon essences  
1 tsp each of cinnamon and mixed spice  
1/2 tsp of ground cloves (or nutmeg)  
6 large eggs  
approx. 75gms each of glacé cherries and unsalted  
roast or blanched almonds for decoration.

Optional: A generous 1/4 cup of Sherry, Brandy or Rum to brush onto the freshly baked cake.

Method: The day before making the cake place all of the dried fruit into a large bowl add the undrained tinned pineapple. Mix thoroughly, cover and leave overnight.  
The following day: mix flour and spices and set aside.  
In a very large bowl cream butter, sugar and essences until light.  
Beat in the eggs one at a time adding a couple of spoonfuls of the spiced flour each time.  
Stir in the fruit mix and remaining spiced flour.  
Mixture should be barely dropping consistency. Add a little extra flour or fruit juice to adjust if necessary.  
Line baking tins of your chosen size (1X 23cm or 4X 12cm).  
Add mixture to baking tins and decorate with glacé cherries and almonds.  
Bake at 150 degrees centigrade (conventional oven, not fan bake) for one and a half hours then reduce heat to 130C and continue to bake for approximately a further 2 hours. (Until a skewer comes out clean from the centre of the cake).

Optional: Brush warm cake with sherry, brandy or rum to taste.



## MOTUEKA VALLEY ASSOCIATION

[mva.org.nz](http://mva.org.nz)

Meetings are in the Ngātimoti Community Rooms at 7pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month and all Valley residents are very welcome to attend.

The Association is managed by an elected Committee which can be contacted on [info@mva.org.nz](mailto:info@mva.org.nz).

Pat Shortley	Linda Sillery
Daniel Bulman	Trevor Knowles
Nelly Willetts	Sue Lancaster

We publish a newsletter (bi-monthly) and encourage residents to submit any stories, photos, recipes, feedback, and advertisements

# The Flood of 2025 - Margo's Story

## From Margo and John Crick and Family

It is four months (July 12th mid-winter), since our land, the garden, the orchard and the Greenhill stream running through, were flooded. The stream was running high and wild, but still within its banks, and just managing to get under the Greenhill culvert. At around 4:30pm our neighbour rang – “Margo, Margo! A big log dam in the forest above us, has broken. It is pouring down through our land, huge logs, slash and sediment.” It left 3-metre-high log-jams on their land and in the stream and then within five minutes poured down through our neighbour's land and onto our land. Huge logs, slash and sediment jammed up the culvert and then poured across our land. We were evacuated by the Mighty Kiwi Task Force, over our neighbour's back fence, to the Ngātīmōti School.

The first of our truly wonderful helpers through it all. I am so aware, and appreciate that our story is just one “flood story” among so many in our beautiful Motueka Valley, this winter.

Our story is a forestry story.

We stand beside our friends and neighbours in the Valley, and give heartfelt thanks for all the help, support, advice and care we have received over the following months.

## Our Mighty Helpers:

- Stream diverted from the jammed culvert and ran down our drive for two days. A Council truck saw the stream running down Greenhill Road. They came up and cleared the logs from the culvert onto huge piles on the stream banks.
- Over the next days, our dear friends and neighbours and family came with shovels, rakes, spades and the great little niwashi\*. They cleared the heavy deep silt from the garden beds, leaving big piles all around. A saving grace!
- Then the “Volunteer Army” continued the liberation of the trees and shrubs. Kevin from Oamaru, Tim, Els and two young men who came a number of times. A young group from Canterbury Uni. We called them the “Liberation Army”.
- Huge diggers and little diggers from the Forestry came over the weeks. As careful as they could! They took away over 100 truckloads of silt.
- We finally found a great contractor who was able to remove the silt from under our sleepout.
- Almost every day people arriving with food and ongoing offers of help in many forms. It has continued through the months.
- The local Goodness Group with beautiful spring seedlings for our vege gardens.
- Our fine local Motueka River Catchment Collective with advice and support.
- The Tasman District Council –
  - The TDC Catchment Advisor
  - The TDC Flood Navigators – visits, advice, community meetings. All continuing to support us. With information, ideas, advice about insurance, contractors, moral support and care.

When the Flood Navigator visited we talked about “telling our stories”, remembering the river stories in “The River Flows On”, our Motueka Valley history book. This is a small part of “the story”. Spring is here, our land and the Valley are greening with life again. A miracle, and we are determined to care for the land and the river catchment, to understand and learn more within our community as best we can.

\* A niwashi is a traditional, hand held, Japanese gardening tool.



# TOGETHER FOR OUR CATCHMENT

HEALTHY RIVERS. STRONG COMMUNITIES



**LOOK AFTER THE LAND**

- LOOK AFTER OUR FARM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
- EDUCATION
- SEMI-ARID CENTRE
- LIVING FENCES
- PROTECT NATIVE BUSH
- PLANT STREAMS
- FENCING
- WATER FOR FRESHWATER

**CARE FOR OUR RIVERS**

- RESTORE THE PATH & FLOW OF RIVERS
- FLOOD RESILIENCE
- LIVE SWEETLY WITH THE RIVER

**PROTECT & CELEBRATE NATIVE BUSH**

- RESPECT RIVER SPECIES
- ROCKING NETLANDS
- COMMUNITY NURSERIES
- TACKLE OLD MAN'S BEARD
- LOOK AFTER ESTUARIES
- INVOLVE KAITIARI OF THE AWA
- CATCH PREDATORS & PESTS

**MOTUEKA CATCHMENT COLLECTIVE**

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES...  
to LEARN & SHARE...

...and TAKE ACTION for OUR AWA

SCAN ME

MOTUEKACATCHMENT.ORG.NZ/EVENTS

EVERY ACTION COUNTS... FOR THE LAND THE WATER & OUR FUTURE...  
LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER!

LOVE THE AWA

KA ORA TE AWA KA ORA TE TANGATA  
WHEN THE RIVERS ARE WELL, THE PEOPLE WILL BE WELL.

ILLUSTRATION BY JACQUI CHRYN

# Help Shape How We Live With and Care for Our Rivers

**Motueka Catchment Collective (MCC) is about community action — and we need your voice.**

Floods, farming, swimming, fishing, whānau — our rivers touch every part of life in the catchment.

For the past three years MCC has been working alongside the many people who already care for our rivers — farmers, lifestyle block owners, town residents, schools, and community groups. Generations of people have put time and energy into planting, wetlands, and careful land management.

But the catchment faces real challenges: erosion and sediment loss, water quality pressures, rising costs and regulatory demands, and climate extremes like droughts, floods, and biosecurity threats. Recent floods have reminded us how closely our lives are tied to the rivers, and why the need for more coordinated, community-led action is urgent.

That's why we've drafted a plan for building strong, resilient communities and healthy rivers across the catchment.



**See the one page visual and share your feedback in our short survey via the link or QR code:**

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/J9LHYXF](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J9LHYXF)

**Full draft plan:** [motuekacatchment.org.nz/resources-2/](http://motuekacatchment.org.nz/resources-2/)

**Questions or kōrero:** [dana@motuekacatchment.org.nz](mailto:dana@motuekacatchment.org.nz)

This isn't a council plan — it's about what we as a community can do together. The visual shows the main themes and focus areas — from river care and land management to native bush, wetlands, and community resilience.

**We'd love your feedback by mid January 2026 about:**

- What stands out?
- What's missing?
- What matters most to you in living with and looking after the river and community?

Together, let's shape the future of how we live with our rivers.

## Quiz answers

1. Charles Dickens
2. 8
3. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Comet, Vixen, Cupid, Donner, and Blitzen
4. Norway
5. White Christmas (over 50 million copies)
6. The Pogues
7. England
8. 9
9. Dr. Seuss
10. Germany



# DISCOVER NGATIMOTI SCHOOL

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- Personalised and engaging learning programmes
- Teachers who love what they do and who go the extra mile
- Forward-thinking and financially sound school
- A real community hub that can feel like family
- Free bus services, free stationery, free trips, free experiences
- The region's biggest and happiest festival!

We hope you've enjoyed our Ngatimoti Festival, proudly run by our Ngatimoti School community.

Join our Ngatimoti whānau.  
Small school. Big heart. Bright futures.  
We'd love to show you around contact [principal@ngatimoti.school.nz](mailto:principal@ngatimoti.school.nz) to arrange a time!




**Ngatimoti School Swimming pool keys** are available for the summer at a reduced cost of \$90 per key for community members. Please find out more about the terms and conditions by contacting the school office asap. [office@ngatimoti.school.nz](mailto:office@ngatimoti.school.nz)

**School closes for 2025 on Friday 19 December.**  
**The 2026 school year begins on Tuesday 3 February.**

Ngatimoti School is very proud to have so many positive connections, with great parent and local community support, as well as wider recognition of what we offer. Recently we welcomed teachers from Auckland and Wellington, to share their international language expertise with our Year 6, 7 & 8 students. This was another great way to grow some inter-cultural understanding, which is one of our current school goals.

Last week, 35 of our students represented us at the Motueka Inter-School Kapa Haka Day. What a great celebration of confidence and connection, with our students navigating positively as members of a wider community. Ka rawe!

Bark Bay is Ngatimoti School's 'adopted site' as a part of Project Janszoon in the Abel Tasman National Park. Our two junior classes enjoyed a visit to Bark Bay courtesy of Sea Shuttle, with two of our senior students leading the learning activities. Being outside can be a positive way to learn to navigate in a changing world, as despite some inclement weather, our students showed resiliency and positivity.

The recent school athletics day for 8–10-year-old students was another opportunity for many of our athletes to shine. All of our representatives did extremely well, with Tara taking top overall place for 10-year-old girls. Unfortunately, the senior competition was cancelled due to rain.

It has been great to hear of successes of past students who have done well at High School and who have plans for their futures. It is also great to hear that one of our past Ngatimoti School students has recently been selected as Head Boy in 2026 at Motueka High School. Congratulations, Nikau Henderson! What an honour and a great reflection of your positive relationships with others, your work ethic and your service to the community.

To end the year, we have our school Talent Show to look forward to, and all classes are busy making clay creations, as well as producing some colourful prints. The senior class has a trip to Bark Bay and also two days to participate in the 'Exploring Marine Reserves' programme. We have a visitor from Project Jonah coming to teach us about whales and dolphins, and our enviroleaders will be out and about at Lake Rotoiti learning about eels.

Next year, we look forward to a Vintage Car rally visiting us in March, the senior class taking on the 'William Pike' Challenge and all four classes continuing their structured literacy and maths learning, swimming lessons and then class camps at the end of 2026. What a rich curriculum we offer! If you would like to know more about Ngatimoti School and would like to enrol your child, we welcome you. Please phone 03 526 8842 or email [office@ngatimoti.school](mailto:office@ngatimoti.school) or [principal@ngatimoti.school.nz](mailto:principal@ngatimoti.school.nz)

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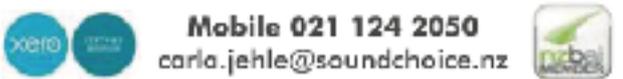


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