

Clutha District Council

Minutes of the hearing of verbal submissions to the Bruce Community Facility special consultation, held in the Council Chambers, 1 Rosebank Terrace, Balclutha on Thursday 7 November 2024 commencing at 9.00am.

Present His Worship the Mayor Bryan Cadogan, Councillors Kevin Barron, Dane Catherwood, Wayne Felts, Gaynor Finch, Bruce Graham, John Herbert, Alison Ludemann, Simon McAtamney, Dean McCrostie, Brent Mackie, Jock Martin, Ken Payne and Bruce Vollweiler

In Attendance Steve Hill (Chief Executive), Jules Witt (Deputy Chief Executive), Pauline Young (Communications Advisor), Oliver Walker (Policy) and Julie Gardner (EA/Governance Advisor)

Apologies Councillor Michele Kennedy

Moved Mayor Cadogan/Councillor Herbert and Resolved:

“That the apology be received.”

Mayor Cadogan welcomed everyone to the submissions hearing and advised that it was being livestreamed and recorded.

Mayor Cadogan started the meeting with a Whakatauki.

Moved Councillors Finch/Felts and Resolved:

“That Council agrees to extend the duration of the Bruce Community Facility Submissions Hearing to enable all submitters to be heard during the hearing process.”

1 PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES OF BRUCE COMMUNITY FACILITY CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive and Strategic Planning Manager provided a summary of outcomes of the Bruce Community Consultation.

The report highlighted that 620 submissions had been received and of those, 309 (49.84%) favoured Option 1: Community Library & Pool facility with a 6-lane swimming pool (\$19.4M), while 311 (50.16%) favoured Option 2: Do not build a new library and pool facility.

Moved Councillors Finch/Ludemann and Resolved:

“That Council receives the ‘Preliminary Outcomes of Bruce Community Facility Consultation’ report.

That Council notes the ‘Preliminary Outcomes of Bruce Community Facility Consultation’ report.”

2 VERBAL SUBMITTERS EXPECTED ATTENDANCE, PROGRAM AND SUBMISSIONS BOOKLET

The Chief Executive and Strategic Planning Manager presented the proposed speakers for the hearing and the submissions booklet.

A technical update to one submission was tabled and noted.

Moved Councillors Ludemann/McCrostitie and Resolved:

“That Council receives the ‘Verbal submitters expected attendance, program and submissions booklet’ report.

That Council notes the ‘Verbal submitters expected attendance, program and submissions booklet’ report.”

Submitters and notes of the main points of their verbal feedback follow:

Session 1

Health NZ Te Whatu Ora – Gagan Gurung

- Reiterated his submission and presented a power point supporting Option 1.
- Provided background on his role with public health.
- Crucial for health and wellbeing of people and this facility will help address these issues.
- Strengthen health and wellbeing within the community and promote a sense of belonging and social connection.
- Accessibility for all within the community is essential for maintaining a community’s vibrancy.
- Will also promote growth in the Milton area through having a modern facility within the town.

Balmoral/Tuapeka Rural Water Scheme – Roger Cotton

- Reiterated his submission – supports the community however not happy about 3 waters Better Off funding being used for this project.
- Has been stated that this funding is to be used for 3 waters projects and should be used for these and not the pool project.
- Congratulated Council for the use of their depreciation funds however this has fuelled the ‘nice to have/need to have’ debate from the government.
- Highlighted that the Greenfield bore project is in dire need of support and would better fit the profile for allocation of Better Off Funding.
- Does know that Council will do the right thing but just challenging Council to make the right decision.
- Reiterated once again his support for the pool project.

Ron Cowie

- Provided background information on himself.
- Highlighted that there was consultation 6-7 years ago, disagree where pool is going, should have been built back then and at Taylor Park.
- Doesn’t rank soap box meetings as consultation process.
- Doesn’t believe pool will be built for \$19.4M, more like \$23M.
- Better off funding should be used for 3 waters projects.
- Average ratepayer in Milton pays \$3K currently, with the pool this will increase Milton rates by up to 56%.
- Where are the people going to find this extra money?
- Fix the existing pool by adding a new liner, just don’t get consultants involved.
- Nice to have but not a necessity!
- Fix the water schemes first.
- Against the pool, fix it and stop spending the money.

Councillor Ludemann left the meeting at 9.45am, returned at 9.50am.

Darlene Adam

- Provided background on herself.
- Reiterated her submission.
- Noted the age of those in the room and highlighted that it would have been nice to ask the children and younger people in the town that will be paying the rates in the future what they want.
- It’s a shame that decisions are made by those that aren’t personally invested, it always comes down to the dollar.
- Free internet in this facility is important for those families that can’t afford their own.
- Yes it will increase rates but there is a subsidy that can be applied for to help with these.
- Cyclists that she has talked to have all been really positive about a new facility, as would be able to use the internet, find out about other tracks around the area etc.
- Generational investment for Milton which is important.

- Highlighted that there had been strong opposition when Moana Pool was built in Dunedin and now look at this facility – it is used by people from all over the place.
- A pool brings everyone together, becomes a hub for families and the community.
- Rehabilitation requirements would also be met in a new facility with easy access for everyone.
- So passionate about this complex for Milton – it's not just a pool!

Gilbert Black

- Lives on Back Road, Milton.
- Highlighted points from his submission.
- Cost is the main concern.
- Unhappy with proposed rates increases as stated in the LTP.
- Believes there will be more need for social housing as people won't be able to afford to live here without subsidies.
- Council needs to look at what is essential and not nice to haves.
- Disappointed that more investigation on other options has not been undertaken – could the pool be made smaller, do we need more meeting rooms, can some work be done now and some later?
- 1300 households in Milton area would need to service a debt of around \$7K each.
- Need to admit that we don't have the population to support these big projects and would like Council to look further at Option 2.

Mark Taylor

- Lived in Clutha District for most of his life.
- Speaking on behalf of himself and his wife.
- Believes Milton's project is a bit out of timing, district is suffering a lot with other issues especially around water schemes.
- Collaborative approach with community library.
- Pool is still fit for purpose and doesn't need all the 'fluffy' stuff'.
- Perfect storm with cost of living increasing, changes in infrastructure, farming converting to forestry.
- Old pool is 50 years old, worthwhile looking at other options to utilise this facility as has been no detail around this.
- Can the new facility be buffered to help the financial loading on the community?

Joeline Ratana

- Highlighted personal story.
- Strong support for proposed complex.
- Understands the financial implications but important not just for today but for the future.
- Perhaps look at increasing the policy around rates rebates as the current level is too low in this day and age.

- Never going to be the perfect time to build this complex and important to remember that.
- Acknowledged all the hard work that has been put into this by the groups involved.
- Believes there is a strong need for the complex in Milton, social and community hub for everyone.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.25am.

The meeting was reconvened at 11.00am.

Session 2

Fitz Gerwitz

- Discussed 'Our Place Milton' and what the people of Milton wanted.
- All that the people wanted was to get their footpaths fixed but that got lost amongst the pool project discussions.
- Other projects have been completed along the way when all they wanted was the footpaths fixed.
- Finds the pool project terrifying, council is already up to its neck in debt and yet they want to borrow more.
- When debt has to be repaid where will the Councillors be? Not around the council table and it will be someone else's problem.
- Believes this Council is about impoverishing the district as a whole by plunging it further into debt.
- Cancel the project now, it is not required.
- If Council really cares about future generations, then it needs to get its finances under control.

Wayne MacAulay

- Reiterated his submission and the issues facing people in the current climate.
- Every dollar that people earn is being stretched to the limit.
- Huge increases in rates because of 3 waters, ORC rates are increasing, and people are struggling to survive.
- \$20m+ is a step too far for the pool/library complex.
- To fix the pool is still an option as it is still being used so why not just do that?
- Project that he would love to see go ahead but just a step too far at the moment.
- Government needs to help out more.
- Upgrade cost would be \$4-\$5M against \$20M+, and is it necessary to have a new pool/community library?
- If the pool had been maintained over the years we wouldn't be having this discussion.

Don Sinclair

- Reiterated his submission and provided copies of an October Clutha Leader as additional to his submission.
- Gave a rundown on the photos that he had taken of the Roxburgh Pool that were provided for the hearing.
- Highlighted that Roxburgh started this project 10 years ago and had raised \$3M, pool is heated with solar panels and heat pumps. Solar feeds back to the grid.
- Believes Council could do similar with the Milton Pool.

Clutha Concerned Citizens/Clutha Rates Proposal – Phil Barrett

- Highlighted the concerns that have been raised on the Group pages about the pool project.
- Unaffordable at this price.
- Concern about ability to meet their own personal needs with the proposed rates rises.
- Had run a poll but was disappointed with the results from the members of both groups, possibly because it was not anonymous.
- Most of those that voted wanted to investigate upgrading the existing pool.
- Would love Milton to have a pool but no option for this in the submission.
- Disposable income being eroded by cost of living, affecting more and more people.
- Is this Council in danger of just saying words and not keeping to a set goal?
- When it's time to vote what is the actual level of imposition you are willing to put on the community?
- People are on the brink, and some didn't even realise that rates were going up.

Phil Barrett

- Questioned Councillors as to whether they had had any more information given to them to help them make a decision.
- Foundation work required – why is this not included in the budget along with a funding option?
- Possible \$2M Trust funding – what happens if this is not achieved?
- \$1.9M Better Off funding – knows about the current government agreement but can this change? And if used for the pool, will this have an impact on future infrastructure funding?
- Actual running costs – these don't appear to have been explored that well.
- Unanswered questions on financial side that will impact rates – can these be sorted out before the vote is held?
- Timeframe is confusing – if it goes ahead when will it start and why is this not going out to tender or is it a fixed price contract?
- Shame that more work around refurbishment of pool was not added to consultation document.
- Not opposed to the pool but just wants people to know what the actual financial implications are if it goes ahead.

Peter Wilson

- Important to be able to speak to a concern.
- Services are great if we can afford them.
- Currently not a good time to be looking at this project when people are struggling to live.
- Prudent not to rate anyone outside the Milton catchment for this project.
- More and more farmers are wanting to sell up and move, farms become forestry.
- Community facilities should not be a debt to the ratepayer.
- Towns are struggling with shops closing.
- Need to look at other ways to fund the project.
- Thanked Council for the services we currently have but need to be mindful of not putting any more financial pressure on the district's ratepayers.
- Cut the cloth to suit the needs.
- Prioritise – water, wastewater are important.
- Find another way of funding the project instead of rating.
- Let the champions of our community have their say and lead the way.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.13pm.

The meeting was reconvened at 1.30pm.

Session 3**Larry Frost**

- Submitting against the proposal as over 64% of respondents in the Our Place Milton consultation said they wanted the pool to remain in the Taylor Park area.
- Believes the responses from this consultation have been overlooked during the BCF consultation.
- Concerned about the costs associated with this project and believes it will increase even further.
- Have never received any costs about refurbishing the existing pool.
- Pool should not be on the main street but should remain where it is – close to the camping ground and other Taylor Park facilities.
- Affordability is the key issue here and needs to be considered further.
- He commented that under the representation changes he will no longer be in the Milton ward but in the Lawrence ward so should not be paying the Milton rate for the pool.

Ray Powell

- Milton and the district must have a modern pool available locally all year round.
- Old pool requires a lot of maintenance and is not fit for purpose.
- All children need to learn how to swim and sports people, and older people need to have a heated pool for their use – eg. Rehabilitation, exercise etc.
- A modern pool and facilities are not a nice to have, they are essential to have.

- Need to encourage people to the town and district as well as giving existing residents a reason to stay.

Therron Tapp

- Urged council to revisit the idea of refurbishing the existing pool.
- Original plan involved upgrading heat pumps, roof replacement, filters etc.
- Council has a poor track record of completing projects on budget.
- Reiterated that previous consultations were overwhelmingly in favour of keeping the pool in its current location.
- Existing pool has a lack of maintenance and looks like it has been abandoned.
- Leave the pool beside the camping ground where families can have the opportunity to use it.
- Would rather spend money on maintenance than a replacement pool.

Nanetta Knowles

- Not here about the statistics and the numbers.
- In support of a safe and accessible pool where people can learn to swim comfortably and confidently.
- Important that everyone learns to swim in a safe environment so that they can overcome their fear of the water and be confident around it.
- Adults can improve their fitness and wellbeing.
- Provides inclusivity for everyone and a social place to meet.
- Children currently swimming in unsafe and polluted areas which are a recipe for disaster.
- Will be a struggle but important to make the sacrifice for the young and old of the town.

Marie Smith

- Chairperson of Bruce Community Facilities Trust and Life member of the Milton Swimming Club.
- Existing pool is past its use by date.
- Children need to enjoy the water to learn respect for the water and by having a pool available all year round this will reinforce that.
- Water safety skills need to be taught as our coastline is very close, along with rivers and lakes.
- Beneficial for older people to use the pool on a regular basis – commented she was aiming to get a medal at the Masters Games!
- Please build the pool now as the price will only increase and then Milton will end up with no pool.
- What is the cost of a life??

Martin Kidd

- Most Senior Orthopaedic Physiotherapist in the southern region.
- Only place for exercise currently is in Mosgiel due to the way the hydrotherapy pool has been designed with a ramp access.
- Children drowning has been an issue throughout the generations.
- Need to be engaging children through to elderly in water safety.
- A decent pool in the town would encourage those needing to use a hydrotherapy pool to go to Milton instead of further afield.
- Fundraising will ramp up once the go-ahead is given.
- Social aspect of a pool is also important and other businesses such as cafes will also benefit.
- Think long-term, global, and acknowledge there is an increased cost but will give us a better facility for the future.

Milton Primary School & Tokomairiro High School Principals – Kayla McGregor & Vicki Wish

- Advocating for young people and the residents of Milton who deserve equitable opportunities like the rest of NZ.
- Provide 16 hours a year of swimming, all within 6 months as the pool is unable to open in the winter and becomes unbearably hot in the summer months.
- Not large enough to allow children to properly gain their swimming skills.
- Students have worked on designs for the pool, and they are buzzing about the possibility of a new pool.
- Students have raised funds of \$4K towards the pool through a Wheel-a-thon.
- Fit for purpose hub would allow the children to have a safe space for them to meet in after school.
- Children of Milton deserve quality facilities.
- Would like Milton to truly be the 'Town of Opportunities' and a new pool/library would be a huge enhancement to the town.
- Unfeasible to take students out of town for school swimming, students gain NCEA credits for swimming.
- Current pool is very well-placed but even if it moves it would still be accessible.

Carl Schiller

- Presiding Chair of Milton Primary School Board of Trustees.
- Remember it's a Library and a Pool.
- Libraries support preschool and learning and supporting of children at school.
- Resources available to everyone in the town.
- Highlighted that the library is not just for books anymore but also digital, audiovisual, guest speakers etc.
- Important for children to get comfortable around water.
- Cost shifting – if new facility is not chosen then there is still maintenance and other issues that have been identified to deal with, and it has been highlighted in the report that No fix is guaranteed, so still a cost to ratepayers.
- Loss of revenue to local areas as pool users will do all their shopping out of town if they are using the pools at Mosgiel or Dunedin.

- Transporting children out of school is not financially feasible as children can only manage a one-hour session in the pool. Travelling would add 1.5 hours to the trip and take away learning time from the classroom.
- Parent support would not be readily available.
- What will make our district more attractive now and for our future community?

Kim Schiller

- Community member, parent, homeowner and a ratepayer.
- Hardworking community full of amazing people.
- Need to spend money now to stop the town from stagnating further.
- 3 groups – positive people who want change and growth and development and are happy to contribute on their rates for the greater good, the opposers who have stated that the ‘more privileged in Milton have a strong voice’.
- Acknowledged that she falls into the ‘privileged’ group but that is through hard work and making the right choices. Not her family she is fighting for but the vulnerable in the community that are struggling and are affected by the entire economic situation.
- Problem solve and raise additional funds that can be used for subsidies, grocery vouchers, swim concessions, look at ways to extend rates rebates, pay it forward scheme.
- Small communities cannot do things on their own – they need the whole district to help.
- Abandoning this project will not be good for the district.
- The people that are most excited are those that have got the least.
- Perspective – group of people using cost as an excuse for resistance - more about nostalgia, sentimentality and loss of control, and a hatred and mistrust of council.
- Observation from Bruce Herald August 1892 - 142 years ago, there were people that were hindering council and that is still happening today.
- Wants Milton to be a nicer place, functional and attractive where people want to stay.
- If the facility doesn’t go ahead, it’s a signifier – demonstrates that Milton does not want change.
- Worried that the positive people will stop fighting for great things if the facility doesn’t go ahead.
- Future generations want to pay the rates and want the town to be better.
- Not just about a pool it’s about ambition and intention and a brighter future for our district.
- It all comes down to how this council wants to be remembered – a council who followed the 142 year old tradition and pulled the pin and allowed Milton to be the town of the ‘bare minimum’ or the council who is remembered for driving the town forward and making a difference.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.00pm.

The meeting was reconvened at 3.30pm.

Session 4

Lyn Clark

- Arguments in the community are all about money, not about the kids.
- Kids are not accessing swimming because the pool is not great.
- Mediocre facilities in Milton for kids, Taylor Park has not been updated for years.
- Swimming Pool/Library will breathe new life into the town and will be vibrant and appealing and attract newcomers to the community.
- Knows people in Milton that have lost family members in the water and it's not great.
- The right facility needs to be built for the benefit of the future generations.
- So much water around Milton that kids need to know how to swim and be confident when they get into the water.
- A year-round facility will ensure that they are swimming in a pool and not a river or a creek.
- Nothing appealing about the Milton Pool.
- Reiterated again that no one is talking about the kids!

Carlee McCaw

- Lives at Milburn, business owner, mum, member of the community and annoyed she is standing here yet again regarding the pool.
- Has been stated in the media that 'everyone in Milton wants the pool/library' so why are we back again? Should be asking 'how do we make this happen'?
- Yes it's about money, but it's never ever not going to be about money, it's never going to get cheaper, so what is going to be done about it?
- Don't want to be standing here in 5 years' time arguing this again.
- Council's responsibility is not just fiscal its societal and it's important to remember that.
- How do we pay for it is the question that needs to be answered and how do we help the people who can't afford it?
- People already working on the 'How' so just help them.
- Question has been asked and answered multiple times so now it's 'How do we make this work?'

Aaleeya Sinclair

- Reiterated that Milton needs a new pool.
- Goes to swimming lessons at Moana Pool as the pool at Milton is not fit for purpose.
- More opportunities in Mosgiel and Moana Pool as they are places that you can actually enjoy swimming.
- Loves to read but has read almost every book in the Milton Library and doesn't want to have to go to Mosgiel Library.
- Even if you say 'No' to the pool today you will eventually have to say 'Yes' one day.
- Milton needs this new Library/Pool facility for the future.

Bruce Community Facilities Trust Committee - Stephen Woodhead

- Highlighted key points from his submission.
- Important to recognise the price increase that has triggered this process.
- Not a swimmer or library user but recognises the importance of both of these facilities to the Milton area.
- Not just a library/service centre but the fabulous staff also supply crucial social services to the community from a day-to-day perspective.
- Library is not just a place for books, they are a modern interactive learning centre, and our library is not fit for purpose.
- Has visited Mosgiel Pool and viewed that facility and how well it is working for that community.
- Usage at Milton Pool has declined as the facility is not up to scratch and people are choosing to go elsewhere or not swim at all.
- It's time we bit the bullet with this project and deliver a fit for purpose facility for Milton.
- Focus on the positive and ask 'how can we help those in the community who will struggle with an increase' thinking about the long-term benefits that this key piece of infrastructure will provide for the town.
- Requests Council to commit to this project and move forward and deliver this project.
- Confident the committee can meet the \$2M target, currently have \$200K and working on relationships with potential major funders.
- Believes the consultation process and the conversation have been good for the community.

Hugh Howat

- Chief concern is about the people that cannot afford the increase in rates and are worried that if council keeps using the ratepayer as a bottomless bank, they will find it impossible to meet their commitments.
- Complimented the Committee on their efforts but reiterated that those who are struggling need to be given consideration and he is speaking on their behalf.
- He is for the pool project but is worried about those that will struggle if this project goes ahead.
- Wished Council well in their decision-making but urged them to consider those that cannot afford any increase in rates.
- Pro the pool but can see the flip side and it needs to be affordable for those that can't afford it in the meantime.
- A formal process needs to be put in place to help the people that need help – the genuine ratepayers and renters in this district.

Moved Councillors Graham/Herbert and Resolved:

"That Council receives verbal submissions to the Bruce Community Facility Special Consultation Process."

The meeting closed at 16.35pm.

Read and Confirmed

**B A Cadogan
MAYOR**