



How it Began

A community is emerging on the south coast of Wellington, New Zealand, centered around Houghton Valley and involving the following streets: Buckley Rd, Cave Rd, Hornsey Rd, Houghton Bay Rd, Hungerford Rd, Queens Dve, The Esplanade, Twomey Grove, View Rd, and Waitaha Way.

One hundred years ago Wellington was a series of settlements connected by cart tracks. The Houghton Valley / Melrose area was known for the number of springs which provided farm lets with water for people and stock alike.

Since then these clusters of 19th century developments joined up to create almost continuous housing between the south coast and Willis St. Many enjoy the fantastic location but leave every day for work and life in the city and beyond. No shops, churches (there was three of each) with the most visible features a popular school, playcentre, serious surf and playing fields created from Wellington's former rubbish dump.

The area appears to passersby to be just a dormitory suburb of about 500 houses. However scratch the surface and there are a myriad of activities. Individuals have been forming up in teams and generating community building projects (currently 25). For instance, creating and naming walking tracks, native tree plantings to regenerate hillsides and gullies, a radio station, retreat lodge, an embryonic civil defence organisation, design for a new traffic intersection, webcam, community gardens, a project to lift a buried creek and an archaeological dig. Many locals have taken up stewardship roles to initiate, organize and implement long term projects that benefit all of us.

In 2010 Grant Corbishley, a resident of Hungerford Rd, began a PhD titled, 'Stewardship: an ethico-aesthetic approach to uncertain futures in the Houghton Valley Area'. He started with a letter-box drop asking people what they knew about the history of the area and what ideas they had for the future, and then followed up with interviews with 80 residents.

From this many ideas emerged that became projects. And another outcome was to "join up of the dots", linking the local groups and individuals who had largely been doing their own thing. That is the purpose of this website. Other examples are the two-weekly newsletter (presently e-mailed to 190 households), afternoon teas held every Sunday afternoon in the community garden and the Houghton Valley Community Facebook page:

http://www.facebook.com/thesafetyofficer#!/pages/Houghton-Bay-CommunityProject/118404768189002?sk=app_2373072738