



Closebourne Village Residents Committee

Annual Reports for 2024 AGM

www.closebourneresident.org

Closebourne Village Residents Committee – Chairperson’s Report, 2023

Dear Residents and Friends in the Village, I am very pleased to provide this report on the hard work that your Residents Committee (the CVRC) has undertaken during 2023 and to review some of the results. I accepted the position of Chairperson at the request of the Committee in May last year due to resignations, and I have enjoyed working closely with the remaining six Committee members since then. As residents it is important to remember that all Committee members, whether of the CVRC, the Social sub-Committee, Garden Group, or other interest groups, are volunteers offering their time and energies to making our Closebourne community an enjoyable, comfortable, and interesting place within which to retire. Thank you to all those volunteers – you have earned our respect and support.

A strong focus for the CVRC in 2023 has been on the further development of resident facilities which have been under pressure in recent years as Village numbers have grown. The construction of the new Garden Pavilion in February and an upgrade to the ‘Chapel’ community building will provide us with more comfortable and suitable facilities for our gatherings including ducted air-conditioning, better acoustics, new sound and vision systems, BBQ, and entertaining equipment and so on. The ongoing efforts of the new 2024 Committee will be to ensure that the ‘detail’ of the fit-out is delivered as requested in the coordination and discussions with residents over recent times.

During 2023 the CVRC has used its own funds raised and negotiated with Keyton to provide:

- The Sophia Jane Courtyard Café and barista coffee machine.
- A monthly complementary BBQ for all residents.
- Equipment for resident activities such as Pickle Ball, a croquet lawn sweeper, hoses for the Garden Group, ice maker for the bar and so on.
- Funding for special events such as Australia Day and the Annual Christmas Dinner.
- Organised Village improvements such as the light bollards at the entrance, LED lighting to the bar, sound/PA systems in Morpeth House and for outdoor events, etc.

Members of the Committee have also been able to assist and represent residents with expediting maintenance or repairs to their Villas by Keyton or in resolving disputes or disagreements between residents.

In 2023 the proposed increase by Keyton in Monthly Recurrent Charges was again the subject of disagreement with residents expressed through the CVRC. The increase was widely felt to be excessive, particularly in these difficult economic times. Despite many attempts by the CVRC to negotiate a more reasonable compromise position, there was no movement by Keyton and they lodged a dispute with NCAT, through their lawyers against the CVRC. NCAT handed down a decision in favour of the CVRC (with no costs against the residents) which resulted in a small (2%) reduction in the increase sought by Keyton. Whilst this was not substantial, NCAT firmly stated that Keyton should negotiate in good faith with the residents, through the CVRC, in the future.

From a personal perspective, I have been honoured to represent all residents as Chairperson of the CVRC for the last six months. If elected again to the position of Chairperson in 2024, I promise to listen to residents, promote inclusion and I will continue my part in the good work of the Committee in providing the best community experience for all residents.

For the Closebourne Village Residents Committee,

Trevor Nye, Chairperson, 17 January 2024



Closebourne Village Residents Committee

Secretary's Report

www.closebourneresident.org

Secretary's Report February 2024

At an extraordinary meeting of the Closebourne Village Residents Committee, held 6 April 2023, the following motion was passed unanimously by the committee:

Motion: that Trevor McGowan-Slee, in the absence of other Committee member nominations, move to the position of Secretary of the Closebourne Village Residents Committee and that Denise McGowan-Slee move to the subsequent vacant committee member position.

Since that date I have fulfilled the role of Secretary by taking meeting minutes, managing communication between the committee and residents and management. I established the primary channel of communication via the email address closebournevrc@gmail.com and have handled incoming correspondence by forwarding matters to the most appropriate committee member with copies to the whole committee. Outgoing correspondence has also been sent through this address and copied to the whole committee. The bulk email system has been streamlined through this central email address and the paper copy distribution list for those residents not on email have been constantly updated to ensure (to the best of our ability) that all residents are fully informed of committee activities. This has been supplemented by a regularly updated residents website with an easier to remember address: closebourneresident.org.

2023 has been another busy year for the committee with most of our efforts focused on the FY24 Budget process/negotiations, the subsequent NCAT response and development issues around the Garden Pavilion and Chapel upgrade project.

Sincere thanks to Chairperson Trevor, Treasurer Bruce, Denise, Pauline, Bob and Gerda for your support over the past year.

Trevor McGowan-Slee
Secretary
Closebourne Village Residents Committee



2023 CLOSEBOURNE VILLAGE RESIDENTS COMMITTEE (CVRC)

Treasurer's Report for the Year 2023

During the past year, the CVRC funds show a deficit of \$4,087.15. This deficit is principally made up from equipment purchases for the use village residents by the Committee.

These items purchased include a coffee machine and outdoor furniture for Sofia Jane Café, an electric piano for the Chapel and a grounds vacuum cleaner. Keyton Management and the Garden Group have also contributed 50% towards the purchase price of these items.

INCOME

Bar	\$21,117.25
Raffle	\$1,736.07
Functions	\$1,162.90
Garden Group Contributions	\$1,703.00
Keyton Reimbursements	\$2,494.64
Total Income	\$28,213.86

EXPENDITURE

Bar and Cocktails	\$16,613.94
Raffle	\$1,347.01
Sausage Sizzle	\$1,520.11
Social Functions	\$6,022.26
Equipment Purchases	\$6,523.50
Administration	\$274.19
Total Expenditure	\$32,301.01
Profit (Loss) for 2023	(\$4,087.15)

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

Cash at Bank (per Bank Statement)	\$7,876.76
Activities Float	\$ 280.00
Bar Float	\$ 175.00
Cash on hand (proceeds not banked)	\$1,726.35
Reimbursements from Keyton (owing)	\$560.00
Funds Available at 31 December 2023	\$10,618.11

I confirm that the above statement accurately reflects the accounts of the Closebourne Village Residents Committee for the year 2023 as at 31 December 2023.


Bruce Agland
CVRC Treasurer



Closebourne Village Residents Committee

Finance Sub-Committee

www.closebourneresident.org

Finance Sub-Committee Report February 2024

The Finance Sub-Committee draws from Residents Committee membership with tasks delegated to specific Committee members. In the recent NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), Trevor Nye handled negotiations with Keyton, Denise McGowan-Slee undertook researched, analysis of relevant legislation in consultation with NSW Fair Trading Specialists, Trevor McGowan-Slee analysed the budget figures and refined formatting of the NCAT submission. Each committee member was involved in every step of the process and contributed to discussions around the draft and final documents.

The Finance Sub-Committee has monitored the Annual Budget process. It met with the Operator's staff to discuss line items and represented the interests of residents in these discussions.

Revision of Utilities Charges

In March 2023, LendLease Retirement Living (LLRL)(now Keyton) called a meeting between Finance Staff, Village Management and the Closebourne Village Residents Committee (CVRC). The purpose of this meeting was to agree on new electricity tariffs in light of the increased charges being imposed by Shell Energy. Management highlighted the fact that raising the tariffs charged to each villa would ease the village budget deficit by countering the sharp rise in electricity costs that have affected the whole economy. The CVRC and LLRL agreed on a rate similar to the best rates offered to the local community at large. The tariffs agreed to have resulted in an average increase of \$30 per villa per month for electricity supply and usage and increased the return to the Recoupments income in the budget, effectively reducing the operating deficit of the FY24 Budget by 6.2%.

When the Operator presents the Village Budget each year at the end of April, the line items for electricity and water include the supply for these utilities for the whole village – i.e. every villa AND the common areas of the village. This means that the village is invoiced by Shell Energy for the supply of electricity to the whole village. In the same way, Hunter Water invoices the village for water supply and usage. The Operator sets the electricity tariffs and has contracted SEENE to read electricity and water meters for each villa and invoices each villa for electricity (daily) supply and usage as well as water usage. Those villas with solar panels receive a credit for electricity returned to the grid at a rate set by Keyton. Villas in Closebourne are metered and charged for gas individually and direct from resident chosen suppliers. Gas supply and usage for the common areas are invoiced to the village and presented in a discreet line item in the budget. SEENE returns the funds collected from residents and is presented in the Income line item entitled "Recoupments". The "Recoupments" income line item increased from \$165,196 in FY23 to \$255,393 for FY24, an increase of 54%. The total utilities budgeted cost increased from \$372,120 in FY23 to \$454,387 for FY24 – an increase of 22%.

Quarterly Statements

Every three months the Committee receives a quarterly statement to show where the village budget is going. The most recently received statement was the September Quarterly Statement. We examined the document with Village Manager, Peter Hoad, at our committee meeting, questioning line items that varied from the budget prediction. He responded satisfactorily to each of our questions referring in particular to carry-over invoices from the previous financial year.

Auditors

KLM Accountants, our elected auditors met with the Residents Committee at its October 2023 meeting and received a full report on KLM's activities. The audit process focussed heavily on the Wages and Salaries budget line item before submitting their approval of the village budget. Moving forward, the Finance Sub-Committee has asked KLM to look closely at the Community Association line item.

NCAT Decision

The Tribunal Member referred to Keyton's submissions, identifying that they sought to balance the village budget within 3 financial years or so. Keyton highlighted that it was their contractual and statutory right to increase recurrent charges, and that budget increases had occurred in other Keyton villages.

The Tribunal member considered that:

- the only *live issue* was whether the increase charges should take effect with or without modification as per the Retirement Villages Act and Regulations.
- it was of no assistance to compare recurrent charges in other villages due to differences in size, facilities and location.
- seeking to remedy a problem of a deficit budget of 3 years, a situation that has arisen over ten years, appears to be lopsided to a point considered to be onerous on residents.
- reducing the increase from 15% to 13% would not significantly extend the timeframe to bring the budget to balance and would be counterbalanced by income from the 14 villas currently under construction.
- balancing a budget can be achieved by increasing income and/or decreasing expenditure.
- the Operator's desire to increase recurrent charges to the point where income matches expenditure is understandable BUT there is no evidence, and no reason why that goal needs to be achieved 'within 3 financial years or so'.
- negotiations only involved compromise by the Residents Committee and that any suggestion that Keyton sought to avoid further proceedings in the Tribunal is difficult to accept given that negotiation history.

In our submission, we referred to the impact of the proposed increase compared to the increase in the aged pension. The Tribunal considered this to be relevant to the point that the member undertook his own analysis on this. The Member also accepted that the increase in electricity tariffs cannot be overlooked in the equation. For those reasons, the Tribunal considered the amount sought by Keyton should be modified in the manner suggested by the Residents Committee.

In his conclusion, the Tribunal Member stated that it would seem preferable for Keyton to have discussions with the Residents Committee in the journey towards a balanced budget. Such discussions should enable the achievement of Keyton's objective in a manner that provides a softer path for increases in the recurrent charges for residents.

Trevor McGowan-Slee
Co-ordinator
Closebourne Village Finance Sub-Committee



Closebourne Village Residents Committee

Social Sub-Committee Report

www.closebourneresident.org

Report by Social Sub-Committee Chairman for 2023

Good Morning Residents. I'm Bob and I'm the Chairman of the Social Sub-Committee.

This last year, 2023, has been another successful year for the Social Committee. We have been involved in celebrating many successful functions including Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Welcome to new Residents, Christmas and New Year celebrations as well as the John Noble Concert, Wandin Estate lunch and wine tasting, Boydells lunch and wine tasting to name a few.

Of course we have had the usual things to complain about like dishwashers that sometimes don't work, kitchen too small, lack of air conditioning, lack of Bar refrigeration and on it goes.....

But – let's look forward to 2024 with a positive view.

The Residents Committee Chairman, Trevor Nye, has kept the Social Committee fully informed about the new Pavilion and the new facilities we can expect.

If we get even half of what Trevor says we'll get it will be great, however I have no doubt we'll see it all come to fruition by about mid this year. Can't wait.

So, what does this year hold for us?

We will, of course, be doing the usual functions as last year including the very popular lunch and wine tastings – additionally we are anticipating a function to welcome the new Oval Residents – be good to see those Villas up and ready.

And what about a big “knees up” for the opening of our new Garden Pavilion?

It looks to me like 2024 is going to be not only one of our busiest years but also our most challenging .

In closing I'm taking this opportunity to say “thank you” to those who have assisted us during the past year – of course the Ladies on the Committee, Anne, Sandy, Mardi, Claudia, Pauline and Marilyn deserve a big thankyou – especially from me – I'm a man and can't even boil water so what use am I when it comes to catering?

Additionally I am grateful to Trevor Nye and the Residents Committee members who always seem to be available when needed.

And, of course, you – the Residents. You make our functions the success they turn out to be. And for helping with set up of tables and chairs, clearing the plates away, packing the dishwater – need I go on – you know what you do.

I might ad those tables seem to get heavier every year – or is it my age?

That's it for 2023 – 2024 here we come.

Bob Richardson
Chairperson, Social Sub-Committee
17th Jan 2024