

**Minutes of a meeting to hear submissions on the Representation Review 2018
held in Council Chambers, 10 Gorge Road, Queenstown on Monday, 13
August commencing at 1.00pm**

Present:

Councillor MacLeod (Deputy Mayor and Acting Chair); Councillors Clark, Ferguson, Forbes, Hill, MacDonald, McRobie, Miller and Stevens

In attendance:

Ms Meaghan Miller (General Manager, Corporate Services), Mr Naell Crosby-Roe (Manager, Communication and Engagement) and Ms Jane Robertson (Senior Governance Advisor); five members of the public and one member of the media; three members of the public and one member of the media joined the hearing via Skype from Wanaka.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Mayor Jim Boulton and Councillor Quentin Smith. Councillor Forbes also indicated that she would have to leave the meeting just prior to 2pm.

**On the motion of Councillors MacLeod and McRobie
the Council resolved that the apologies be accepted.**

Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

No declarations were made.

Councillor Miller entered the meeting at 1.03 pm

Confirmation of Agenda

The agenda was confirmed without addition or alteration.

Hearing of submissions

The Council noted that two submissions had been received after the closing date for submissions. Further, comment had been received from Stats NZ on 31 July 2018 about the 2018 meshblock pattern and the Local Government Commission had recommended be considered as a submission.

**On the motion of Councillors MacLeod and Forbes the
Council resolved that the late submissions be
accepted for consideration.**

The Deputy Mayor stated that for reasons of practicality, it was his intention to hear the submitters taking part in the hearing via Skype first in the meeting.

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1. Rachel Brown

Speaking on behalf of the submission made by the members of the Wanaka Community Board ('WCB')

The Board members supported the retention of the WCB. It provided an interface between the Upper Clutha community and Council and brought decision-making down to a level where people believed that they could make a real difference. The WCB wanted to be involved in any further discussions about representation in this district.

2. Rachel Brown

(Personal submission)

Ms Brown stressed her interest in the principles of democracy, the role of community boards and their effective representation. She had been involved in the Council's 2006 representation review which had attracted a lot of submissions because of the proposed abolition of WCB and she was a member of the Community Boards' Executive Committee.

The first part of her submission supported retention of the status quo for representation, but also sought a comprehensive review when the representation review was done again in 2024. She pointed out that the present model had been largely in place since amalgamation in 1989 and it was timely to have a proper reshuffle. This would require a direct approach to communities asking they felt they were being fairly and effectively represented and it was important to address the current feelings of disaffection from smaller communities. The 2024 review needed to look at completely new and different models, including community boards district-wide. This would serve to enhance democracy through localism, thereby allowing those with an interest in common to manage their joint interests themselves.

The second part of her submission was a request for the Council to reconsider appointing all three Wanaka Ward Councillors to WCB for the full three years of the Council term. She noted that Board members made a different declaration from Councillors, requiring them to have the interests of the Wanaka Ward in mind when serving as a Board member. She considered that this could result in difficult situations for the individual. A case in point was the advice given to the Board that it would create a potential conflict for the Board as a whole to make a submission to the Representation Review. She wanted the role of Councillors as community board members to be a strength and not a weakness.

3. Bruce Hebbard

Mr Hebbard supported the proposal upon which the Council had undertaken consultation. He opposed the establishment of a separate Councillor for Hawea as this could lead similarly sized communities such as Albert Town to seek their own Councillor. At present the WCB contained two members who were resident in Hawea and he believed these members could put the community's view across satisfactorily.

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He agreed with the previous speaker that a closer look was needed at representation in Wanaka in 2024 as population trends would be more locked in by that date.

4. Tim Ryan

Speaking on behalf of Keep Hawea Beautiful

Mr Ryan advised that he had received responses from 185 people indicating support for a dedicated Councillor for Hawea. He noted that the Stats NZ definition of the Hawea area took in multiple communities from Luggate to Makarora and he was concerned that such a broad community had almost zero representation on the Council. He observed that Hawea was in a similar situation as Arrowtown which sought to retain its own seat on the Council.

Mr Ryan wanted a future of localised decision-making that was very different from at present. He believed that the Council could begin decentralisation by empowering the community board and community associations with decision-making abilities. This would provide a greater local voice and localism would make a lot of people happy that they were having an impact on decisions. The community sought a whole new way of governing and the community's rate of growth meant it now needed more than three Councillors to ensure representation parity with Queenstown. He suggested that if there were two additional members, one should be elected solely by the Hawea community.

5. David Clarke

Mr Clarke sought the retention of the Arrowtown Ward, either in its current form or with the addition of the two areas proposed by the Council in its original proposal. He had served two terms as the Arrowtown Ward Councillor so had a personal interest in retention of the Ward especially because development pressure across the district meant that a strong voice for Arrowtown was needed. He considered that the formula based on population was flawed as it was solely related to number and not necessarily need, pointing out that when the borough was first amalgamated into the district in 1989 there had been three Councillors for a population of only 850. By contrast, it was now a struggle to justify electing one Councillor. Needing a local Ward Councillor to lobby on Arrowtown's behalf was not parochialism as the individual elected recognised that they needed to represent the whole district. However, Arrowtown had a special character and punched above its weight as an economic driver for the district. It had also recently been named by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage as one of Otago's 'Landmarks' and this was another reason for Arrowtown's separate representation.

Mr Clarke supported retention of the status quo or adoption of the wider boundary that the Council had proposed. He did not support extending the boundary further to make up numbers to retain a Ward Councillor. He added that the fact that there was rarely an election for the Arrowtown Ward Councillor because only a single candidate was put forward was a challenge to the community to put up a number of candidates.

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6. Mark Samways

Mr Samways thanked the Council for permitting him to speak because his submission had been late. He had wanted to have the deadline for submissions pushed out to allow for wider debate in Arrowtown but this had not occurred. He believed that the sense of belonging to Arrowtown extended to other areas in the vicinity. Inclusion of the areas north and southwest of Arrowtown into the Ward would address the population imbalance now and prevent having to do so every electoral cycle. Arrowtown was neither an island nor isolated but it was logical to connect with residents in Gibbston and the Arrow Junction as these people had a greater affinity with Arrowtown as their social and cultural hub than people elsewhere in the district. He was concerned that the requirement for fair and effective representation was only based on numbers and did not recognise cultural identity. He noted that development land was not freely available in Arrowtown and it was sensible to expand the boundaries to extend the reach much wider than the current representation recognised.

7. Mike Farrier

Mr Farrier advised that he had owned property in Arrowtown since 1987. He was disappointed that the Council had arranged no public meetings to discuss the proposed change in the Arrowtown Ward boundaries and had instead relied on social media which was not a democratic choice until all had access to the internet.

He did not agree with enlarging the Arrowtown Ward boundary, adding that Millbrook was a lifestyle village and a business that was different in character from Arrowtown. He believed that the Local Government Commission should enable democratic local decision making by local communities and recognise the Arrowtown community of interest. He noted that elections for the Arrowtown Councillor were rare because often there was only one candidate which resulted in a low voter turnout and this mirrored the declining interest in local government over the last few years. He observed that larger electorates with more candidates were better for the first past the post electoral system and he therefore favoured option 4 (merging Arrowtown Ward with Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward) whilst making provision for an Arrowtown Community Board.

8. Sue Patterson

Speaking on behalf of Arrowtown Business Association (ABA)

Mrs Patterson stated that the ABA supported the retention of the Arrowtown Ward but this was not a new stance because they had supported this for a number of years. ABA accepted the proposed expansion to include the other meshblocks (Millbrook and MacDonnell Road) as these areas already considered themselves to be part of the Arrowtown village and Millbrook had been around for 25 years. Arrowtown was a town of special character and significance that benefitted from its own representation and having a local resident on the Council who was able to voice special concerns was important. This role was currently very ably done by Councillor Stevens who also attended many of the meetings of local associations in the community. She referred to

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Mr Clarke's point about Arrowtown's special landmark status but added that this was a double whammy because the Chinese village and the heritage part of the town were separately identified. Overall there were 70 historical buildings and trees in Arrowtown and these unique qualities required a voice to ensure that they were looked after. 90% of the business owners in Arrowtown were local residents and there had been a huge growth in visitor numbers to the town. Arrowtown needed a local Councillor to ensure that Arrowtown had the necessary infrastructure. Further, Arrowtown was the only area in the district where there were pensioner homes and there was also a block of affordable housing.

Mrs Patterson noted that the Arrowtown Village Association also supported the retention of the Ward Councillor.

9. John Glover

Mr Glover noted that the Council had only been forced to consider changing the boundaries of the Arrowtown Ward because the population could not meet the populations of the other two wards. He noted that the proportions would be evened up if Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward elected 8 Councillors instead of 6 and Wanaka Ward elected 4 rather than 3. This would result in a fully compliant proposal without having to change the present boundaries of the Arrowtown Ward. A larger Council would also serve to improve representation in the other wards where population was increasing at a faster rate than in Arrowtown.

He did not believe there was any point in introducing other lower democratic structures like local community boards because there was no budget for them and it was important to have real engagement with communities. Mr Glover believed that more Wakatipu Councillors would improve the opportunities for community engagement by spreading the workload and increased representation would provide a better feeling of empowerment locally. Increasing the representation in Wanaka would also deal with some of the concerns of Wanaka.

It was noted that because the number of appointed members on WCB needed to be fewer than the number of elected members, four Wanaka Ward Councillors would necessitate increasing the number of elected board members to five, which would be relative over government.

Councillors thanked Mr Glover for taking a district-wide view.

The meeting adjourned at 1.46pm and reconvened at 1.47pm.

Deliberations

It was noted that although the Council was required to undertake the representation review every six years, it had the option to do it every three years. Councillor

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Macleod suggested that there may be value in undertaking another review in 2021 when up to date census figures would be available.

Members agreed that Arrowtown was a place of special significance that needed a Councillor who understood these characteristics.

Councillor Forbes left the meeting at 1.58pm.

It was noted that population growth would always be dominated by the south east of the Queenstown-Wakatipu area and there was a risk that in future the western area would have no representation at all. Splitting the Queenstown-Wakatipu and Arrowtown Wards into eastern and western wards could be an option in the future.

It was noted that the addition of meshblocks to Arrowtown only served to make it less non-compliant and the matter would still have to be referred to the Local Government Commission for determination.

Consideration was given to Ms Brown's submission about the allocation of Wanaka Ward Councillors to the Wanaka Community and whether this should be on a one-year rotational basis. The Council noted that making this change had not been part of its original proposal and there was currently no appetite to including in the option being put forward.

Having had regard to the submissions and the dominant theme they contained of retaining the Arrowtown ward, with or without additional meshblocks, it was agreed to adopt the original proposal upon which consultation had been undertaken:

- a. All Councillors shall be elected in wards;**
- b. The names of the wards shall be: Queenstown-Wakatipu, Arrowtown and Wanaka;**
- c. The boundaries of each ward will be as at present except that Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward will lose meshblocks 3039806, 4001187, 4011665, 401188, 401189 and 4011666 which will become part of the new and enlarged Arrowtown Ward with boundaries that will now take in MacDonnell Road and the general area of Millbrook;**
- d. Six Councillors will be elected by the voters in the Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward; one Councillor will be elected by the voters in the Arrowtown Ward; and three Councillors will be elected by the voters in the Wanaka Ward;**
- e. There will be a Wanaka Community Board comprising four members elected directly by voters in the Wanaka Ward and the three Wanaka Ward Councillors appointed by Council.**

The meeting concluded at 2.19pm.