

Social and community issues – what matters to our Tauranga City Council Mayoral and Ward Candidates?

SocialLink¹ asked all mayoral and ward candidates five questions from a social and community sector perspective. They could leave out any questions they did not want to respond to.

Bethlehem General Ward Candidates

There are nine people standing for the Bethlehem ward. Seven candidates provided the following verbatim unedited answers.

Charlene Apaapa

1. We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?

Tēna koē Sociallink for all the mahi you and your kaimahi do, ngā mihi nui. My name is Charlene Apaapa, Ngāti Pango tōku hāpu, Ngāti Ranginui tōku iwi. Unpaid/voluntary work is a link for an individuals connection to their community whilst simultaneously serving others in need, it's a call before the call, a tool between paid employment, a call to serve, it does not discriminate - all walks of life can assist organisations. Unpaid/voluntary work has a spirit that says 'we assist anyone in need' and 'we will regardless of whether we can get paid or not'. Those who receive support often become those giving unpaid voluntary work to the need. My involvement includes the SPCA walking with Tasmanian dogs in care, Women's Refuge assisting a 24/7 line that may or may not require safe house support in Wellington, and my Ngāti Pango Hāpu Incorporation assisting the revival and resurgence of Ngāti Pango whose location is by the banks of the Wairoa awa in western Tauranga, and whose mana has been affected by 'progress' dams, bridges and highways all tools leading to our potential extinction and the time has come to address this for my people - paid, unpaid or voluntary a tool for survival.

2. What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?

¹ SocialLink is a registered charity managing and based at The Collective in 17th Avenue, a not-for-profit co-working space enabling collaboration. SocialLink is the umbrella peak body for the social and community sector in the Western Bay of Plenty. www.sociallink.org.nz

We don't need to look far for exceptional community clubs in Tauranga. My membership and connection to the Tauranga Judo Club led me to a 1st Dan black belt in Judo competing nationally and internationally and at the time gaining a world ranking. All of this and more is possible for the individuals and families of Tauranga Moana. I expect council to provide an optimistic position in partnership that keeps facilities open, safe and inviting. There comes a time when all facilities require regular service. Let's keep that social contract maintained.

3. What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?

Firstly, support should exist. It is a concern if our police are unable to provide stages of process because a service does not exist in areas that may include crime, mental health and addiction and support services. If there are repeat and growing needs, address it by conference, what we resist persists. We are a vibrant recreational city. For some this is not reality. Council ought to be part of the pie in a recipe that includes other organisational input and collectively let's address this, enough is enough.

4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?

I support our rainbow community and any roadway art because I prefer inclusion over bias where an unnatural bias may cause harm, this is the reality of our rainbow community. It's a call for inclusion of diversity, I support diversity, so simply, I support it.

5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?

TCC's Vision and Direction suggests how non-Māori achieve success when working with Māori. There is a difference between Te Ao Māori principles, and principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

It suggests a number of Te Ao Māori principals or regulators such as Manaakitanga, Rangatiratanga, Kaitiakitanga, Whanaungatanga, Wairuatanga, Tūmanako, and Te Reo Māori. Māori don't need reminding of their regulators for it is their Te Ao Māori - their way of life, they live it.

The framework is achieved by measures of participation partnership, and protection, i.e. the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Looking deeper, Tauranga Moana iwi recognise the need for taonga protection, kaitiakitanga of their lands and taonga while seeking shared beliefs and partnered action with TCC which I believe Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed from its inception. Removing principles of Te Tiriti that were written for non-Māori only disadvantages non-Māori. Te Tiriti o Waitangi was written by our ancestors ensuring

treasures are our kaitiakitanga of it and a partnership that ought to be upheld, recognised recently in hikoi where 'Toitu Te Tiriti' shines strong on signs, clothing, and jewellery supportive of the message and you don't need to be Māori to declare it. The invitation to support is extended to all of us.

I have hope for a national understanding that moves both our region and our nation forward as tension provides a purposeful intention to change. As a councillor, where I require advice from experts or where I may be incorrect in my interpretation, I will seek assistance from representatives of Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana an autonomous body made up of 17 representatives from each of the hapū and iwi in Tauranga Moana.

Shelley Archibald

1. We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?

Past Rotarian. Planted trees @ Sydenham Park. I organise neighbourhood gatherings every 6/8 weeks. I'm supporting the new local cafe owners to become our community cafe & supporting our new primary school on Millers Rd. I help neighbours in various ways, including garage sales & gardening. Was involved in the disability sector & sports sectors and used my business to connect our community. I've mentored tertiary students who needed a hand.

2. What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?

When drawing a comparison between Bethlehem and Merivale (reports on TCC website), it is clear to see inequity in facilities & amenities. Therefore, I fully support the Strategic City Direction in the LTP, which includes 'Delivering Improved Community Facilities & Amenities'. Overall I think our city is well on its way to providing appropriate facilities & amenities, however, there is still much to do, particularly in regard to creating neighbourhood connectedness and social cohesion for all neighbourhoods & communities within them. Tauranga's community strengths lies in the myriad of community organisations and volunteers that work tirelessly within them and those that partner with them. The wide range of support to multiple vulnerable groups is nothing short of impressive. Council must be a supportive partner and provide appropriate resources to empower our social and community sector who work to improve the wellbeing of individuals, families and society as a whole. Supporting vulnerable communities is not a 'them' problem, but an "us "" problem.

3. What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?

There is so much that Council could and should do. A good start could be to prioritise and deliver outcomes from Vital Update Research 2023. Council needs to adopt a robust strategy specific to vulnerable community outcomes. Part of that could include increasing community engagement with folks that are typically harder to reach. Encouragement for voter turn-out for elections and Census is also important. Decision-makers need to know

the full picture. A better understanding leads to better decision-making. Increasing community preparedness for major emergencies is particularly important for all vulnerable people and their communities. Increasing physical places and social spaces that celebrate all of our residents, is key. Everyone deserves to feel included and safe in our city. Every community deserves to not only have a voice, but a safe place to share it and it's something Council can provide. Vital Update research 2023 acknowledged that we have many vulnerable communities. In my view, addressing affordable and safe housing is the most pressing issue for the wider city, and particularly salient for vulnerable communities. Physical places, social spaces and affordable safe housing are cornerstone priorities for vulnerable communities and a way to promote social inclusiveness and neighbourhood connectedness.

4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?

100%. An inclusive city means all communities are not only respected, but celebrated. That means being a LGBTQIA friendly city. Our city would need to continually support the Rainbow community and ensure members could fully participate in city life and importantly, feel safe. Our city could then "show" our Rainbow community that they are highly valued, are entitled to feel a sense of belonging and recognised as valued members of our wider community. Specific events and initiatives, places and other social spaces also means increased city vibrancy overall and adds to the richness that many ways of being brings.

5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?

An inclusive city acknowledges and celebrates our past, is connected in the present and will appropriately invest in our future. Our unique history should be showcased, celebrated and valued as taonga. In order for this to be achieved, every councillor and our Mayor must work in partnership with tangata whenua and our community to ensure there is full participation and protection for and respect of Te Ao Maori. Since I whakapapa to Ngapuhi and Ngati Ruanui, I can contribute by advocating, supporting and embracing having Te Awanui Ward. Te Awanui Ward provides a voice for and bringing life to Te Ao Maori at the Council table, so that Council can be well-informed in wider city Council decision-making processes. I support continuation of the existing City's Strategic Direction, within which is the visual representation of Kupenga, which weaves together Council's 5 community outcomes and the 3 approaches on 'how' Council will do everything. I can fully support strategic planning and development of our city that incorporates the fundamental principles of inclusiveness, including safety, equity, accessibility, diversity and responsiveness.

Felicity Jane Auva'a

1. We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?

All my life I have been involved in community groups, ranging from coaching sports teams to volunteering at old folks homes to bring music and entertainment. I've also led neighbourhood support groups and been a crime watch rep . Ive taken my turn at assisting with breakfast in schools and been on several School BoT. Currently I'm involved with St. Peter's in the City where we run a Tuesday lunch for the homeless and other cultural events for the community.

2. What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?

We have wonderful support groups here who provide amazing resources for our community. one example is Good food trust who supply food to our St Peter's homeless lunches. Another is Otumoetai Baptists church 'Social Supermarket' where local shoppers can buy their weekly groceries at a fraction of the price. Councils role in supporting such groups needs to be further explored.

3. What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?

Although this falls under central governments social services , local councils do have a responsibility to provide places where communities can aspire to have healthy and prosperous lives. Working with social agencies who support the more vulnerable such as kainga Ora , the police , budgeting , job search , youth and counseling services etc and building up relationships with these providers is vital to find out where there is alignment.

4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?

5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?

Te tiriti o waitangi is our founding document and upholding the principles is a responsibility of a councillor. As stated a Te Ao Maori approach will help support healthy environments and healthy communities. Respecting the concept and learning and Understanding the history of Tauranga Moana will help my decision making at the council table.

Jos Nagels

1. We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?

Apart from some infrequent public group activities In so many other ways, I was naturally very helpful to people I encountered with advice and unpaid labour (within the bounds of reason). As my work was intensively demanding, my most effective support was annual financial contributions to 10 or so nonprofit charitable organisations.

2. What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?

Those in governance besides the fiscal aspects have a responsibility to ensure the well being of the community. Empathy with fellow citizens and Organisations that voluntarily contribute and help are often the “unseen” life force bonding communities. Whist grants are made to selected bodies, targeting community and volunteer groups/clubs that meet societal social needs and the like should not be treated as commercial businesses and rated out of existence.

3. What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?

Council's role in my opinion is to be there for the greater public good. Vulnerable community members must have a choice to have somewhere to go for help and advice. Finland is a good example- the homeless are housed and successfully reintegrate into society - an idealistic scenario.

Support must be aimed at a positive outcome.

4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?

Plainly speaking - the standard Zebra crossing are there for every single one of us and absolutely accepted. As already evident rainbow crossings un-necessarily have caused controversy and division. This is very unhelpful, creating a target for radicals on both sides. Far better to live and let live peaceably.

For the above reasons, pedestrian crossings need to be publicly neutral.

5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?

With a lifelong practice and belief of basic earth values and sustainability this is inclusive of key Māori concepts.

Now more than ever, in a climate crisis, our challenge is to preserve Earth as it is our only home!

I espouse transportation reform, accessible housing towards sustainability-(Refer candidate statement) . As a (potential)

Mayor/Councillor, advocate moving from 1960's repeatership to 21st Century rail technologies / housing, etc.contributing to greater equity and a sustainable Tauranga - leading NZ as a best city. Huge challenge, but Better things must happen- then we will have a future!

Bevan Rakoia

1.We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?

Board Chair for the Pacific Island Community Trust Bay of Plenty, we are in the Social and Health Wellbeing space for Pacifica Communities which is a leading provider for Youth Leadership, Emergency and Transitional Housing and Pacifica Labor Mobility, I am also Board Member for the Tauranga Hockey Association and lead their Project Advisory Facilities Group, I am also secretary for a Cook Island Community Performing Arts Group where we secured a Tauranga City Council Matching grant to enable drums and ukeles for the group. I am also a member of the Rotary Club of Otumoetai and have been club president and member of various working committees, I have also been the recipient of the Paul Harris Fellow a recognition by Rotary for services to the community.

2.What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?

I have been fortunate to be involved in the community provider network for the last 10yrs in all areas of community need, sport, financial, mental health, migrant services, food rescue, animal rescue, arts and language, labor displacement. Tauranga is a age friendly volunteer community. I would be in favor for the council to enable communities to lead and be the driver of their organisations, I am of the view that groups need accessible and affordable spaces that are safe to thrive and share resources. I am also of the view that councillors should be mentoring good governance practices for communities to participate and govern well. These are engagements that can start tomorrow.

3.What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?

Affordable and accessible community facilities, the Cook Island Community, we started out of a church space then moved to a basement, then to a Sports club rooms and then to a school gym. Bethlehem, Matua to Otumoetai and now to Te Puke. Venue and Transport costs, choice of time and day and the growth of the culture group have enabled us to be resilient. Council role is to reduce barriers for communities to be resilient whether this is through a facility or community partnerships and funding.

4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?

I would be in favor for the art installation to be in another part of the CBD and not on the road, pedestrians and traffic need to be safe spaces to move, tourist and social media influences will be a hazard. It is a hazard already with users being on their phone and wearing headsets while crossing the road and not looking at traffic. I would be in favor for enhancing the digital space to celebrate this community while also having a dedicated space in the CBD for this art installation. Like hairy mcLary, why can't their be a major art installation for this community in the CBD. My question would be how many users will this art installation draw to the CBD and will shops benefit from this this art installation? Would it be appropriate to enable this art installtion to be a landmark or symbol that will celebrate a major event for this community in the CBD? Or is this one of a series of art installations throughtout the wards, can this project be a collaboration of various partners to enable a significant piece or pieces. What a great opportunity to drive consumers to the CBD and our outer wards. So my answer, yes for art installation in another area of the CBD but no for a rainbow road crossing.

5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?

I would be in favor for Te Ao Maori to be integrated into all our public spaces including all community based events. There should be options for participants to integrate these values but not be the main criteria to be awarded or driver of the project. I would empower the council role to be the driver of Te Ao Maori in its own spaces and council led events be the leader of example and to be recognized by the national iwi body for doing so. I think this adds value to ratepayers. I think it is encourage for private sector initiatives to engage these elements in their projects and be recognized for their efforts. It is a cultural and educational space and will take years if not decades to master the discipline of Te Ao Maori.

John Robson

1. We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?

In Volunteer Week specifically, I was giving presentations at open-to-the-public meetings, the content of which was intended to deliver a better-informed electorate and thereby support the democratic intent of the Local Government Act.

2. What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?

The community strengths and assets in Tauranga are (as in all cities) many - they lie in those individuals (e.g. Bevan Rakoia, Simone Anderson) and groups (e.g. Men's Shed, The Incubator Creative Hub) that work to make our city a better place - either by addressing a 'system deficit' or delivering a 'system enhancement'. Council can support them by recognising the value of 'community'; not confusing 'community' with 'commercial'; making 'spaces' for 'community' within the city; engaging with 'community' better; and, sometimes, just getting out of the bloody way!

3. What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?

Please see my answer to 2. above. I don't think Council has a direct role, but it can indirectly support those individuals and organisations that do.

4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?

My understanding is that in the case of a pedestrian crossing, a 'rainbow' crossing does not comply with the Land Transport Rule: Traffic Control Devices 2004. That said, on the substantive issue (celebrating diversity), there are many ways this might be done (e.g. a sculpture park on the waterfront), and many groups that might be included, not just the Rainbow community. If a legal proposal to 'inclusively' celebrate diversity in our city was brought to Council, subject to costs and practical considerations, I would be happy to vote in favour.

5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?

I see Tauranga (and NZ) as multi-cultural - as such I am uncomfortable with TCC's recently developed Vision and Direction which explicitly mentions only one culture... one 'world view'... that of Te Ao Maori. For this, and other reasons, not least the failure to properly engage the whole community in its development, I would like to see TCC's 'Vision and Direction' revisited.

Kevin (Herb) Schuler

1. We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?

Huge giver of time & energy to school and representative sports teams of many schools and Tauranga water polo for many years, and also some time with Tauranga basketball.

Aquinas College teachers used to joke I should be paid because I spent more time at school than they did!

2. What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?

People are always a community's greatest asset. A happier, stronger, more connected community will lead more people to service.

3. What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?

Show we care. Listen & learn, advocate for them, connect with groups & organisations that can help,, assist/promote initiatives that will help their cause.

4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?

Yes happy to support (proviso not breaking any roading regulations). Rainbows are positive and uplifting. They are universal symbols of hope, faith, love, happiness, and acceptance.

5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?

Will do level 3 & 4 Te Reo Māori to improve language and cultural education that is taught in conjunction. Will learn more of the tikanga from Te Awanui Councillor and any others that are already leaders in Te Ao Māori. Through this process will find how and where I can lead, influence and contribute.