

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.

Tauriko General Ward

There are four people standing for the Tauriko ward. Three candidates provided the following verbatim unedited answers.

Larry Baldock

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?

My wife and I spent our early years of marriage without remuneration helping young people in Tauranga and providing accommodation for some of them in our home. We then spent 15 years in the Philippines doing similar work including medical programs amongst 'squatter' communities in Metro Manila. Since returning to Tauranga in 1996 we have been involved in many voluntary capacities in the community, but mostly with people living with us on our property in Pyes Pa.

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

Sadly sometimes the only support you can give as a Councillors is moral support and encouragement. There are ways that TCC staff can help and at times in the past there has been contestable funding available to assist.

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

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

I have supported the provision of funding and support for Takitimu House and Awhina House in the past. Councils role in the many charities doing good work in our community is always a challenging debate and what support can be given has to be evaluated on a case by case basis and prioritised alongside all that Council is responsible for across our city.

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?

Everyone in our community should feel included and a part of Tauranga Moana. Council can and should promote inclusion, acceptance and appreciation for all the diversity in our multicultural city as it makes our city a better place for everyone.

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 have a track record of supporting and working to bring life to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and that will continue if I am given the opportunity by the voters of Tauriko ward to serve as their ward councillor.

Murray Guy

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?

To answer will lead to a breach of the beneficiaries privacy, and inconsistent with why I provide support, which is not for 'brownie points'.

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

The Tauranga community is diverse, as with all communities.

Our greatest asset is 'our people', and it would seem to me that we could support our community by firstly respecting, valuing, and including them 'meaningfully' in decisions that affect them.

As Community representatives we must be vigilant, outing those in our community who would put at risk efforts to enhance outcomes for all by eroding our democracy, by advocating to deny our community it's democracy.

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

Certainly NOT by selling off 'elder housing' to developers.
We ALL have a role to play, to add value, as individuals, as service providers, as authorities to focus on 'opening gates' versus 'putting up fences'.

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?

Firstly, I note that the Tauranga City Council staff have advised that such an installation as proposed would not be compliant.

Second, I would reserve judgement as required by the Local Government Act until such time as I have carried out due diligence, listened to all submitters, before voting.

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?

My contribution would be, in part, mine and unique to my set of values, understandings and community feedback. Clearly Council has failed miserably when it says, "What success looks like, A spirit of partnership is created between the council, Māori and the community and we work together to restore trust and confidence."

NEVER has community trust and confidence in our Tauranga Council been lower, more wanting, clearly identifying the need to revisit past and present direction.

Stephen Wheeler

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?

Doing accounting work for local charities and completing their complex Charity Returns

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

The various organizations that and volunteers that support and help people are our strengths. Through funding support and using staff to volunteer 1 day a year to help

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

Council's role is to support the organizations who work with vulnerable members as the are the assets council doesn't have.

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?

With rate increases of 16% I believe this is not an urgent issue and is not affordable in the short term.

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 have a strong relationship and working parties bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and I will certainly support and encourage this to continue