



Rangitikei
UNSPOILT...

2010

Taihape Memorial Park Management Plan



Adopted: 25 March 2010 (10/RDC/085)

Part Two: Legislative and Policy Framework specific to Memorial Park, Taihape

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Introduction and background

Introduction

This is a reserve management plan for Memorial Park, a vibrant and popular park located near the centre of Taihape. Comprising both sports fields and native bush, Memorial Park provides for both formal and casual recreational opportunities.

The two main issues for Memorial Park are,

- to promote and encourage the use of Memorial Park for a range of recreation activities and
- to protect the open space character of Memorial Park to enhance the recreational amenity.

This Reserve Management Plan outlines a vision for the future of Memorial Park and includes objectives and policies to guide the future management of the reserve. The concept plan accompanying this Reserve Management Plan illustrates how this vision will enhance the reserve's amenities and aesthetic value, while catering for both formal and casual recreational purposes.

History of the Park

Land in the vicinity of the current Memorial Park was set aside as a recreation park as early as 1896 when the Taihape township was first mapped out. From 1899 to 1956 five land titles were gazetted as a recreation reserve to form the Taihape Domain. Originally administered by the Taihape Borough Council, the amalgamation of local government in 1989 saw the Rangitikei District Council take over the administration of the reserve.

Progressive improvements of the Park have been undertaken ever since. The playing fields and Grandstand were developed from the 1920's. In the late 1940's, pine trees from the Park were harvested and the proceeds invested in the further development of the playing fields. In 1950 the people of Taihape decided by postal ballot to create a war memorial within the recreational park. The project received a £1 for £1 government subsidy and the rest of the money was raised through public donations – every household and business in Taihape was asked to donate towards the cause. Enough money was eventually raised to develop the Memorial Garden and road to the swimming pool. The latter was named Loader Drive in memory of Ernest Loader, former Mayor of Taihape Borough Council.

A memorial plaque was erected in 1953 it reads:

*“Taihape and Districts War Memorial Park
Dedicated to the memory of all who have given their lives
in time of war for the preservation of our way of life”*

The memorial gate to the Park is off Kokako Street. It is an archway that reads “Memorial Park” and underneath, on either side, are plaques that list the names of the men and women, former pupils from the Taihape District High School, who fought and died in World Wars I and II. The memorial gate was gifted from the Taihape District High School when it closed in 1963. Taihape College relocated to a site south of Taihape at Rauma Road. The College has now amalgamated with Taihape Primary School to become Taihape Area School in a world-class development on a site adjacent to the Park on Huia Street. The new school opened in 2009. Unlike its predecessors, it has no dedicated playing fields. However, traditionally, the town’s secondary school has made use of the Park facilities for agreed fees.

The Park was originally known as the Recreation Ground, and is still sometimes referred to colloquially as “the Rec”. However, its new name, War Memorial Park – or Memorial Park – is derived from the two monuments: the Memorial Gate and the Memorial Garden.

The Park is currently used by a wide range of individuals and groups including:

- Town residents who enjoy and use the reserve on a regular basis
- Taihape Community Development Trust
- Sporting clubs based at or using the reserve
- Taihape Area School

In 2008, the Taihape Community Development Trust (TCDT) commissioned Opus International Consultants Ltd. to look into the feasibility of developing a Community Sport and Events Park in Taihape. The study concluded that:

- A “Leisure Hub” should be developed. This would be the recreation ‘heart’ of Taihape - a concentration of leisure infrastructure at, or very near to, Memorial Park;
- The project needs to urgently develop partnerships between the community and two key stakeholders: Rangitikei District Council and Taihape Area School;
- The project should be led by Taihape Community Development Trust to meet the expressed demand for community assets that support community development in Taihape;
- The project should develop and implement a Community Investment Programme. This is a funding plan for the phased delivery of individual projects that progressively contribute to the multi-purpose Leisure Hub Community Centre vision.

A steering group was established in December 2008 of current and potential users of the facilities at Memorial Park, including the District Council and Taihape Area School. It was tasked to prepare a site master plan and funding schedule and has gone on to develop an architect’s brief for the first project in a phased development programme.

At its meeting in May 2009, the District Council resolved to “continue working with local stakeholders to develop the Memorial Park Reserve Management Plan based on:

- The site plan developed by the steering group, and
- A co-operative approach to the future management of the reserve based on a “Sportville” model developed by SPARC. “

Purpose

This plan provides a policy framework for the management of Memorial Park, Taihape. It has been prepared in accordance with section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977.

Tangata Whenua

The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are also relevant to reserve management and development. The Council has been advised of an outstanding Treaty claim (WAI1705), which covers the Taihape township, submitted by claimants who are descendants of Ngati Hauti, Ngai Te Ohuake including Ngati Paki and Ngati Hinemanu, Ngati Tamakopiri and Ngati Whitikaupeka, the founding ancestors of Mokai Patea. Council has undertaken initial consultation on the draft management plan with relevant iwi through the Otaihape Māori Komiti, on the advice of its Standing Iwi Advisory Komiti, Te Roopu Ahi Kaa.

Legal Framework

The Memorial Park reserve is located within Rangitikei District and overall management and administration of the reserve is the responsibility of the Council. The Reserves Act 1977 is the principal piece of legislation that governs the management and development of Memorial Park. Under this Act, Memorial Park is classified as a crown derived recreation reserve.

Table 1 provides the legal description of the parcels of land that comprise Memorial Park and their reserve classification.

Legal Description	Area	Category	Type	Primary Purpose	Title
Part Section 42 Block XIV Ohinewairua Survey District	2.6314 ha	Recreation Grounds	Crown derived	Public Recreation Reserve	Part Gazette 1899 p259 Part 1907 p938 CFR WN634/98
Section 43 &44 Block XIV Ohinewairua Survey District	4.2745 ha 7.7143 ha	Recreation Grounds	Crown derived	Public Recreation Reserve	
Section 97, 98 &99 Block XIV Ohinewairua Survey District	0.1518 ha 0.4452 ha 0.9434 ha	Recreation Grounds	Crown derived	Public Recreation Reserve	
Section 1 Block X Town of Taihape	4.0064 ha	Recreation Grounds	Crown derived	Public Recreation Reserve	
Section 2 Block X Town of Taihape	0.3506 ha	Recreation Grounds	Crown derived	Public Recreation Reserve	

The District Plan

The District Plan lists Memorial Park as a protected natural area. The area around Memorial Park is zoned mixed commercial. There are no current or proposed listings of notable trees or significant buildings at Memorial Park.

Bylaws

Control of Dogs Bylaw 2004: Under the bylaw dogs must be on a lead at all times in the Park except when they are in the designated dog exercise area in the native bush area of Memorial Park (this is listed on the map in Figure 1). Dogs must stay off the playing fields at all times.

Liquor Control Bylaw 2005: Memorial Park is a liquor controlled area in the Council's Liquor Control Bylaw. In a liquor controlled areas nobody is allowed to consume, bring or possess liquor unless in a licensed premises.

Existing Leases/ Licences

Council holds leases for the rental of the land with the following groups and organisations:

- Utiku Old Boys Rugby Football Club
- Taihape Croquet Club
- Taihape Bowling Club
- Taihape Netball Club
- Taihape Tennis Club
- Taihape Squash Club
- The A & P Association/Taihape Area NZ Equestrian Federation (joint lease)
- The Shearer's Club

Under the leases, all of the clubs are responsible for the maintenance and repairs of their own building. All leases are for 10 years and expire in 2017 with rent reviewed annually.

The Council also has a Heads of Agreement with Taihape Area School over its use of the Park.

Features and current use

Location of Memorial Park

The Memorial Park reserve is located on Kokako Street close to the centre of Taihape. It stretches from the corner of Tui Street to Weka Street. It is surrounded by a mixture of commercial and residential area on the western side, the Taihape Area School on the northern side, and borders native bush and the Hautapu River on the east and southern sides.

Topography

The playing fields are mostly flat and the surface of the fields is in fair condition. The reserve slopes down at the southern end with the shearing and stabling facilities on a lower terrace to the playing fields. The native bush reserve covers the eastern hillside to the back of the playing fields. The bush walkway winds itself along the cliffs overlooking the Hautapu River.

Recreational Amenities

Memorial Park contains the following recreational amenities:

- Playing fields,
- Rugby clubrooms
- six tennis/four netball courts,
- Squash clubrooms with two squash courts,
- Croquet greens and associated buildings
- Bowling greens and associated buildings
- Taihape Swimming Pool
- Grandstand
- Shearing quarters and yards with Equestrian show jumping circuit
- Children's playground and skate park
- Memorial Gates
- Public toilets and car parking area
- Native bush area with walking track

The location of these features is shown in Figure 1.

Netball/ Tennis courts

There are courts marked out for both netball and tennis. The courts were resurfaced in 1994 and are due for renewal. The courts are lit to accommodate night games.

Croquet and Bowls

Both clubs have good facilities and greens and a dedicated membership.

Clubrooms

There are five club facilities in the south western corner of the grounds, owned by the respective clubs – Utiku Old Boys Rugby Club, netball and tennis share a building, squash, bowling club and the croquet building.

Three clubs currently have liquor licences - Taihape Bowling Club, Utiku Old Boys Rugby Club and Taihape Squash Club.

Shearing and Equestrian

At the southern end of the Park is the sheep pavilion and on a lower terrace is the shearing shed and equestrian stabling.

Cricket

Memorial Park is also set up for cricket. There is a cricket wicket in the middle of fields one and two and practice nets behind the netball/ tennis courts.

Native bush area with walking track

To the east of the sports fields, is a native bush area allowing for informal recreation, a dog exercise area and a walking track that follow the Hautapu River. This area has been highlighted as a possible mountain bike track and is used for school cross country events. The Rangitikei Environmental Group has managed the containment of Old Man's Beard in Memorial Park for several years.

The Grandstand

The Grandstand can seat approximately 625 and contains changing facilities underneath that are used by clubs. It is a council owned asset that was built in 1924. Council has no depreciation reserves to upgrade the facility.

Taihape Swimming Pool

Council owns the swimming pool complex with a contract with the Taihape Community Development Trust to administer the day-to day running of it. The complex contains a 25 metre pool and two toddler pools currently open for 5 ½ months of the year. Council's current policy is not to fund depreciation on any of its swimming pools.

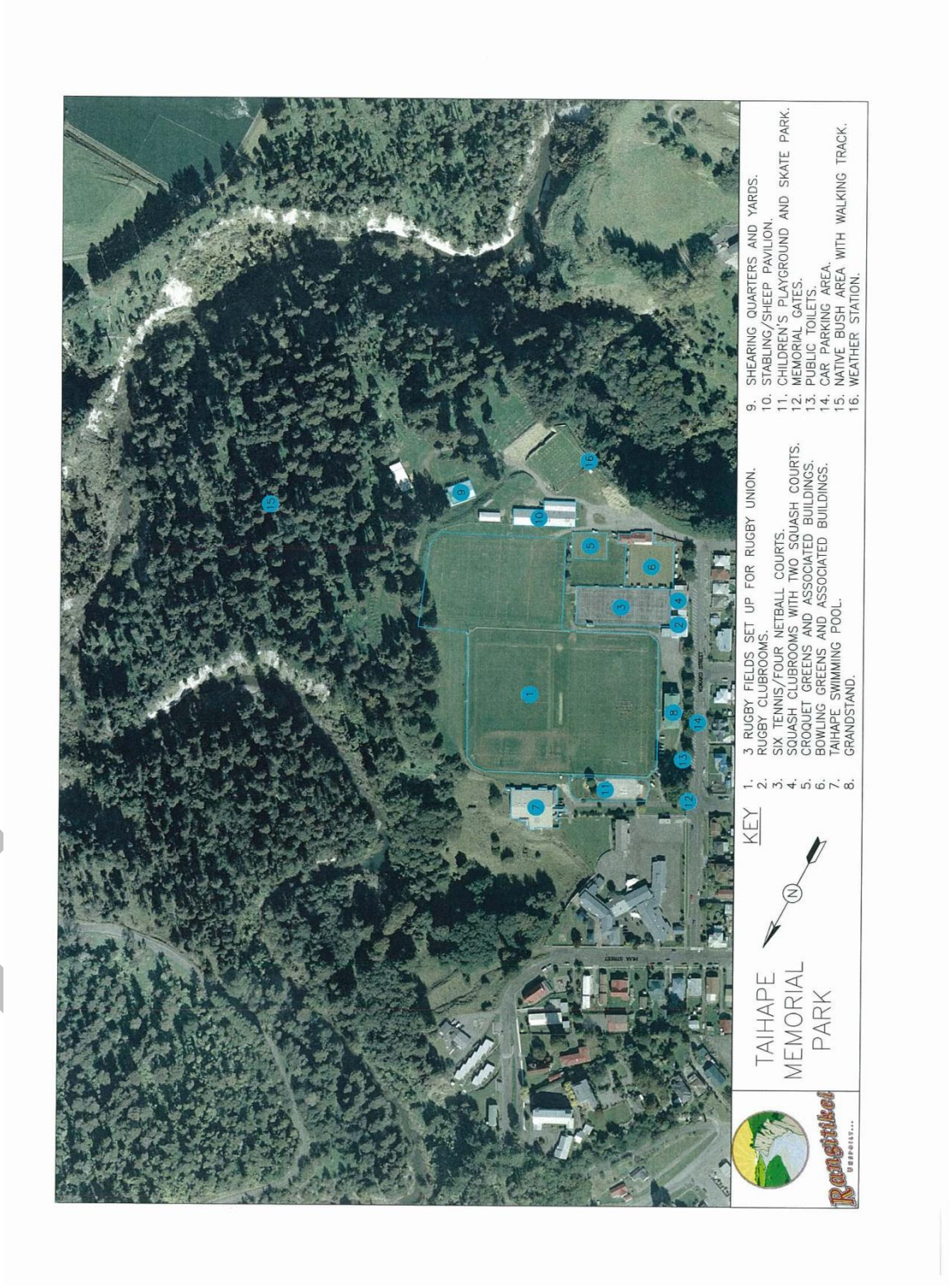
Public Toilets

Public toilets are available at the Kokako Street entrance, located between the Grandstand and the main gate.

Playground and Skate Park

The playground is located on the northern end of the Park, adjacent to the Taihape Area School. It contains two sets of swings, slide and jungle gym set and a see-saw.

Figure 1: Features of Memorial Park, Taihape



Specific Policies for Memorial Park

Particularly in relation to Part One: Policies 1 and 2, the Council will work closely with the Taihape Community Development Trust and the Otaihape Māori Komiti to continue progressive developments at the Park to meet the needs of today, bearing in mind the needs of future generations.

Explanation

The Council-owned facilities at Memorial Park (particularly the Grandstand and the swimming pool) are increasingly past their “use-by-date”. Council needs to find an affordable solution for the Taihape town and district ratepayers that will maximise the recreational amenity of the Park.

Implementation

There is a significant group within the Taihape community that wishes to pursue the development of a community leisure facility at Memorial Park. Council has been working with this group in line with policy 2 in the Recreational Parks and Reserves Management Plan (Part 1) to “maintain and develop recreational facilities at Council recreational parks and reserves in close consultation with the local community to enhance the recreational value and opportunities”.

At the start of the consultation process over this Plan in its draft form, the site of the existing Grandstand was the preferred site for the new community leisure facility. However, as indicated by the number of submissions that favoured a new building but did not favour demolition of the Grandstand to accommodate it, and confirmed by the Taihape Community Development Trust during their oral submission, the community is currently pursuing an alternative site for the community leisure facility, although still within Memorial Park.

This means that the future for the Grandstand on this site is still uncertain. Council has provided for basic maintenance of the Grandstand to ensure public safety but cannot guarantee that it will remain fit for public use. However, there is another significant group within the community that wishes to see the Grandstand recognised as, and retained for, its historic heritage value.

Council should work alongside a group from the community, if one emerges to ‘adopt’ the Grandstand and to either develop it or lead repairs. This would be consistent with its support for the group hoping to develop a new community facility and in line with policy 2 as outlined above.

Along with the general policies mentioned in Part One, the following specific policies are applicable to Memorial Park.

Policy 1: To preserve, protect and enhance the ecological values of the native bush.

Explanation

The native bush area of the Park provides an amenity within the town of Taihape that is not elsewhere available. Control of noxious weeds, in particular old man's beard and gorse in the bush area is an ongoing battle.

Implementation

Council will work with Horizons Regional Council, Department of Conservation, the Rangitikei Environment Group and any other stakeholders, to determine a solution to the problem of the noxious weeds in the reserve.

There is an opportunity to further develop recreational tracks in the bush without damaging the ecological value and peacefulness of the area. Development of recreational tracks within the native bush area will be encouraged in accordance with section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977.

Policy 2: To preserve the character of the Memorial Park Gates, Plaque and Garden.

Explanation

This policy recognises the historic value of the memorial gates, garden and plaque as memorials to the sacrifice made by men and women from the Taihape District High School in World Wars I and II.

Implementation

That any developments of Memorial Park protect the historic value of the area associated with the memorial gates, garden and plaque and accorded due respect.

Action Table for Memorial Park Management Plan

Document and Policy	Action to implement	By Whom	Cost
Part One: Policy 1 To encourage community participation in the planning, development, management and maintenance of Council parks and reserves. Part One: Policy 2 To maintain and develop recreational facilities at Council parks and reserves in close consultation with the local community to enhance the recreational values and opportunities.	Work with the Taihape Community Development Trust and the Otaihape Māori Komiti through the Taihape Leisure Centre group to progressively develop the Park in line with the master site plan, within existing budgets	Policy/Assets	Staff time
	Review the leasing agreements with clubs	Assets	Staff time
Part One: Policy 3 To encourage maximum use of Council parks and reserves by a range of different groups.	To manage bookings at the Park to balance the needs of different groups and ensure that all groups have a fair opportunity to access the facilities	Assets	Staff time
Part One: Policy 4 To ensure as far as practical, the safety of users at Council's parks and reserves.	Develop the master site plan in line with e.g. CPTED principles	Policy/Assets	Staff time
	Carry out a play ground health and safety audit every year	Assets	tbd
Part Two: Policy 1 To preserve, protect and enhance the ecological values of the native bush.	To work with local and regional stakeholders to tackle noxious weeds problems in Memorial Park	Policy/Assets	tbd
	To extend and develop recreational tracks in the native bush area at Memorial Park	Assets	tbd
Part Two: Policy 2 To preserve the character of the Memorial Park Gates, Plaque and Garden	Ensure that developments are respectful and mindful of the historical nature of the memorial features of the Park.	Assets	Staff time