

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the Council Office 156 Brymer Road and online
Thursday the 21st of May 2026 commencing at 6pm

PRESENT:

Chairman: N. Juby
Councillor's present in person: S. Smith, G. Annan
Councillor's present online: E. Williamson, O. Kent, A. Brown, P. Dell, A Sapich
Staff: D. Klee, M. Osborne, B. Jarvis Child, D. Lelievre
Members of the Public: None

APOLOGIES:

G. Dickey, D Cocks, C, Robertson, B David. It was noted that Councillor Barker would be joining the meeting late.

ABSENT: T Clarke_

that apologies be accepted.

Annan/Smith– CARRIED

1. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE 14 February 2026:

Councillor Annan noted that he had previously raised questions regarding options available to staff should they feel they were being bullied or treated unfairly. The Chief Executive clarified that Council has an anti bullying policy in place which has been implemented and reaffirmed, and that individual employment contracts also contain clear processes and pathways should staff wish to raise concerns or issues. It was noted that this clarification has now been inserted into the previous minutes. It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of the 14th March 2026 be accepted as true and correct record.

Annan /Brown – CARRIED

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil

4. OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE

Nil

5. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair tabled the recent communiqué circulated by the Chair of the New Zealand Council, Councillor Barnes. It was noted that matters arising from the communiqué would be discussed later in the agenda under the relevant consultation items. Further correspondence was received from the Department of Conservation regarding Council appointments and elections. It was noted that this information had been sent to the Chair and would be circulated to Councillors via email and included in the next Council agenda.

Councillor Barker joined the meeting online at 6.32pm

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

6.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report

Pūkeko Monitoring Programme: The Chair commented that it was good to see that the pūkeko monitoring project was now underway. B. Jarvis Child explained the monitoring process and advised that staff were undertaking a randomised survey design across established transects. It was noted that staff were integrating this work with other operational activities where possible to improve efficiency. As an example, D. Lelievre undertook pūkeko monitoring transects in the Warkworth area while travelling to speak at a duck night, allowing multiple workstreams to be completed during the same trip. Staff noted that this approach reduced unnecessary travel and enabled operational activities to be undertaken in a more coordinated and efficient manner. Council discussed feedback received from landowners and permit holders, with indications that pūkeko numbers have increased in parts of the region. It was noted that the monitoring programme would help quantify population trends over time and provide a stronger evidential basis for future management decisions. Council also discussed the potential for a special summer pūkeko season in future years. It was noted that such a season could potentially be limited to private land and may help reduce crop depredation issues occurring in parts of the region due to high pūkeko numbers. Councillors noted that a structured season framework could also reduce the administrative burden associated with issuing large numbers of individual permits.

Mobility Maimai: Councillor Smith asked for an update regarding the mobility maimai initiative. The Chief Executive advised that the wheelchair bound hunter who recently utilised the maimai had been very appreciative of the opportunity and had thoroughly enjoyed the experience. While no ducks were harvested during the hunt, it was noted that this may have been due in part to the hunter's intended hunting companion not being available on the day, resulting in limited decoys and hunting experience available to assist. Despite this, the experience was considered very positive overall. The Chief Executive advised that the hunter had made a number of positive social media posts regarding the initiative and that further media coverage was currently being developed. Council noted

that staff intend to undertake another outing with the hunter later in the season, potentially during a period of rougher weather conditions when hunting success may improve, with the intention of capturing further media content around the initiative.

Compliance Activities: Council sought an update regarding compliance activities undertaken during the opening period of the game bird season and discussed both compliant and non-compliant behaviour encountered in the field. The Chief Executive advised that some targeted compliance activity had been undertaken in response to intelligence received regarding alleged offending. It was noted that, where those matters were investigated, the information generally proved to be accurate. The CE commented that when staff are specifically targeting areas where significant non-compliance is suspected, this is often what is encountered. It was also noted that other areas patrolled by staff and honorary rangers experienced relatively high levels of compliance, with only minor technical breaches identified. Overall, Council noted that the season appears to have progressed well. The Chair thanked staff and honorary rangers for their efforts throughout the season and acknowledged the increased compliance presence undertaken this year. He commented that compliance work is not an easy role and noted that a police acquaintance had remarked that Fish and Game staff and honorary rangers are effectively the only people in the country who willingly approach large numbers of individuals carrying loaded firearms each year as part of their duties. The Chair thanked staff and rangers for their professionalism and efforts in undertaking this work safely.

Financial Reports and Levy Position:

The Chair noted that, following extensive correspondence and discussion with national office staff and the council needing to take the extraordinary measure of not paying its February levy due to cashflow issues, it was pleasing to see that the February levy invoice had ultimately been withdrawn and that the levy payment schedule had been adjusted to reduce immediate financial pressure on the region. It was further noted that formal correspondence sent by Council to the New Zealand Council in October of the previous year requesting these matters be formally considered had not been placed on a New Zealand Council agenda, despite two subsequent follow up emails to National Office staff and the Chair of the New Zealand Council specifically requesting that the correspondence be included for consideration. While acknowledging the outcome, the Chair noted that he did not consider the process followed to represent good financial practice. He commented that levy settings and payment timing should be appropriately addressed during the annual budgeting round to ensure regions do not reach crisis point during the financial year, requiring reactive measures or emergency intervention. Council noted that it would continue advocating through the current budget process for levy structures and payment schedules that better reflect regional cashflow realities and long-term financial sustainability.

Licence Sales Update:

The Chief Executive provided an update on current licence sales figures and advised that Auckland Waikato Fish and Game was presently the only region in the country recording increases in both fish and game licence sales compared to the previous year. Council noted that this was a pleasing result given the broader financial pressures currently facing the organisation. The Chief Executive advised that a combination of factors had contributed to Council avoiding a negative equity position during the financial year. These included licence

sales exceeding budget projections, temporary salary savings associated with a staff member being on maternity leave, delays to some planned expenditure, and the council not paying its February levy invoice. Council noted, however, that this did not represent a sustainable long-term solution to the region's financial challenges. It was acknowledged that a number of these factors were circumstantial and could not reasonably be relied upon moving forward. Councillors reiterated the importance of ensuring that future levy settings and funding arrangements are structured in a way that provides long-term financial certainty and avoids regions approaching negative equity positions during the course of the financial year.

It was moved;

That the bimonthly Chief Executive and financial reports be accepted.

Williamson/Smith – CARRIED

7. PROSECUTION SUMMARY REPORT:

The Chief Executive explained the report and noted that moving forward, as part of the consolidated Annual Report and compliance as a core activity that Council is required to report on, this information would be included accordingly. He noted that while this is currently reported through planning processes, this report provided a very comprehensive summary of all prosecution activity. Councillor Williamson noted that Council needed to further publicise compliance and prosecution work. This was discussed and a number of ideas were raised around further highlighting prosecution outcomes, including potential use of social media. Councillor Dell raised the issue of hunters using child and junior licences to tag maimai which is contrary to the regulations in the region. The Chief Executive undertook to investigate this matter further and see if a solution could be found to prevent this moving forward. The Chair thanked staff for the comprehensive report.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the work that Clare Robertson had been undertaking in the compliance and law enforcement space and noted that a significant amount of work occurs behind the scenes in relation to investigations, file preparation and prosecution processes to support frontline compliance operations. Council acknowledged the high standard of work being undertaken in this area. The Chief Executive further noted that, due to the significant increase in compliance activity over the past 2 years, Council was now dealing with substantially more prosecution and enforcement matters. Historically nearly all of this work would have been undertaken externally by solicitors and legal advisors.

While noting that the compliance budget had been exceeded due to several particularly complex cases during the year, the Chief Executive advised that the increased internalisation of compliance and prosecution workstreams had nevertheless resulted in substantial cost savings to Council. It was estimated that had this work continued to be undertaken externally, total costs could potentially have been in the order of approximately \$50,000 to \$70,000 higher than the current expenditure levels.

8. ESTABLISHING A CONTROLLED FISHERY ON THE UPPER WHAKAPAPA

The Chair outlined the history of the access issues within the catchment and noted that this could be one potential avenue to restore access. It was noted that this would be a novel use of a controlled fishery to facilitate access, however it appeared that the Department of Conservation was supportive of the approach. It may also resonate with other landowners in the catchment whereby there is clarity around who is fishing and when. Council discussed the proposal and supported progressing the option.

It was moved;

That Council endorse pursuing the option of establishing a controlled fishery and direct the Chief Executive to engage with the Department of Conservation and local landowners as soon as possible to seek feedback and progress implementation.

Smith/Barker – CARRIED

9. DRAFT SCOPE – POLICY FOR GAME BIRDS CAUSING DAMAGE OR NUISANCE:

The Chief Executive outlined the process and noted that a meeting had been held which he and B. Jarvis Child attended. It was explained that the general concept is to engage with regional experts to develop a sound policy framework that is not overly prescriptive.

Council supported the collaborative approach, including the involvement of regional experts, and noted that there were some refinements requested as the process continues. It was moved;

That Council supports and endorses the overall collaborative approach, including engagement with regional experts, to develop the policy and associated SOP relating to game birds causing damage or nuisance, notes that some refinements to the policy as currently drafted are still required, and authorises the Chief Executive to provide feedback in line with those recommendations.

Annan/Barker – CARRIED

10. PRIVACY POLICY

Councillor Dell noted that there were a number of issues with the way the draft policy was currently framed and recorded Council's objection to the policy in its current form.

Councillors discussed concerns that the policy, as drafted, appeared to conflate the roles and responsibilities of the New Zealand Council and regional Fish and Game Councils within the current statutory framework. It was noted that similar issues had previously arisen in relation to national health and safety policy discussions, whereby national level policies did not adequately reflect the statutory structure of the organisation.

Council noted that there is no legal entity known as "Fish and Game New Zealand" and considered that the wording throughout the document required general clarification and

refinement to ensure it accurately reflected the statutory structure established under the Conservation Act. It was further noted that each regional Fish and Game Council is an agency for the purposes of the Privacy Act and that this needed to be clearly reflected within any national framework.

Council expressed support for the development of a privacy framework in principle, however considered that the policy required substantial amendment to accurately reflect the legal and operational relationship between the New Zealand Council and regional councils.

Discussion also occurred regarding the scope and purpose of the policy, including questions surrounding whether the policy was intended to apply solely to internal staff privacy matters or whether it extended to wider organisational privacy matters, including information relating to licence holders. Councillors noted that further clarification was required regarding the intended application and scope of the framework.

It was moved;

That Councillor Dell and the Chief Executive prepare feedback on the draft Privacy Policy and circulate that feedback to Councillors for consideration at a special meeting.

Annan/Barker – CARRIED

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT

Staff member Danielle Lelievre provided Council with an update regarding the recent Health and Safety Committee meeting. Council was advised that the national health and safety policy had now been rebranded as a Health and Safety Framework following feedback received from regional councils during the consultation process. It was noted that a further updated version of the framework would be circulated to regions for additional consultation in due course.

It was moved;

that the H&S&W report for May 2026 is accepted.

Williamson/Smith– CARRIED

Council moved into publicly excluded at 7.23pm

It was moved;

That the public be excluded from the following part of the proceedings of this meeting pursuant to section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, on the grounds that the public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under section 7 of the Act.

The subject matter to be considered was:

- ***Confidential financial and organisational matters relating to regional budgeting and staff remuneration.***

The general nature of the information to be considered was:

- ***Information subject to legal professional privilege and confidential strategic discussions.***

The reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter is:

- ***To maintain legal professional privilege pursuant to section 7(2)(g) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987; and***
- ***To enable Council to carry on its functions and activities without prejudice or disadvantage.***
- ***To protect the privacy of natural persons pursuant to section 7(2)(a)***

Dell/Smith – CARRIED

It was moved;

That Council move out of publicly excluded session.

Smith/Annan – CARRIED

Council moved out of publicly excluded session at 8.19 pm.

The following resolutions were brought out of publicly excluded session:

It was moved;

That Council hold a Special Extraordinary Meeting on Thursday the 28th of May 2026 at 6.00 pm, with the agenda to be circulated no less than 24 hours prior to the meeting in accordance with Council Standing Orders.

Williamson/Dell – CARRIED

It was moved;

That Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive, Chair and Councillor Dell to develop formal consultation feedback to NZC regarding the 2026 budget and licence fee setting process, including the potential for seeking legal assistance and further information from the New Zealand Council.

Williamson/Dell – CARRIED

It was moved;

That Council approve the draft Memorandum of Understanding with Eastern Region Fish and Game, subject to one minor amendment discussed in publicly excluded.

Annan/Dell – CARRIED

12. GENERAL BUISNESS

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.