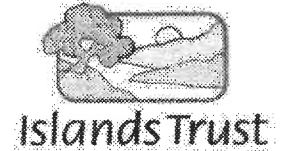


Trustee Notebook *By Sam Borthwick*



Well, it's been a very interesting month on many fronts, with *lots* of big changes coming down through the BC Legislature in the last few weeks, as well as some significant steps towards some change on the home front for Denman too, in the form of the Housing Advisory Planning Commission's (HAPC) Final Report.

First of all I want to congratulate the members of the HAPC on what has truly been a monumental effort in producing their report, which is the culmination of months of meetings, dozens hours of research and review, and many more of discussion and deliberation. The resulting report was formally received by the Denman Local Trust Committee (LTC) on November 14th, and has been referred to staff for an in-depth analysis, which we expect to see sometime in the New Year. The work does not stop there, however- there's plenty for us as a community to digest in the report before we hear back from staff, and Trustee Graham and I are keen to solicit your input on the next steps.

We have requested that copies be made of the Report, which the HAPC will then ensure are distributed to a number of key community locations, including several copies that will find a home at the Library, alongside the accompanying Guide, which the HAPC has developed to aid in getting to grips with the full document. We are also planning an informal meeting for the community (dates to follow once we've had a chance to plan it out a bit), where Trustee Graham and I, as well as potentially some members of the HAPC, can answer questions as to the report's recommendations, and how we think they interface with our Official Community Plan (OCP), and existing Land Use Bylaws (LUB).

There are many recommendations in the report which seem, to me, take steps towards proactively enshrining the ways in which life is already lived here, and on many of the Gulf Islands, instead of reacting to behaviours that we find undesirable. Encouraging people to embrace rainwater collection, allowing for unconventional building methods (à la the beautiful cob houses of the Mudgirls Collective), and examining options for waste management (a.k.a., convincing VIHA that outhouses are not the end of the world), are all included in the report, with exhaustive research to support the suggestions.

The problem with approaching regulation solely as a way to apply the stick, is that there will always be a drive, and in some cases, the necessity, to circumvent rules and structures that don't serve us. I am much more interested in trying offer the carrot- to create possibilities for people to thrive despite the mounting adversities of the current climate. What seeds do we need to plant today that we can enjoy a bountiful and vibrant community in coming years?

As the days wind down this winter, and the weather grows harsher, we get many reminders of the vulnerabilities of living on an island; ferry cancellations, power outages, and increasingly treacherous temperatures and road conditions, but we also get some of my favourite elements of living in this community- chances to come together in the darkness to share warmth, light, and the companionship of those, like us, who make this place home in all weathers.

The heat and bounty of the summer may be behind us for now, but so too are the long lines of travellers crossing to and over our island, the crowds at the stores are now predominantly faces we recognise, and there's the promise of holiday feasts, and the return of the light in the New Year.

Finally, as of November 17th, it has been a year since David Graham, David Maude, and I were sworn in as your Trustees. While I can't say it's all been easy nor even much of it "fun", I can very confidently say that the honour of serving my friends and neighbours in this particular capacity has not waned in the slightest, and I look forward to all that the coming year brings.