

Greetings,

Here is the long overdue first newsletter for the Goomalling Residents and Ratepayers Working Party group. Please excuse the lateness, as many of you may be aware I have been suffering some health problems which has slowed me down on many fronts. Hopefully everything has been diagnosed now and I can maybe be more active on the ratepayer group stuff between treatments.

For those that are particularly interested I have some heart issues and probably a thing called Graves disease. I normally wouldn't spell it out like that but we all know what Goomalling is like with rumours so I thought I'd put it out there before I heard some more strange and untrue things about myself.

Firstly a quick history for anybody reading this in future years. Starting a ratepayers association has been on my mind for a number of years, the catalyst for doing it now was a Goomalling Council member was kicking people off a social media board without warning or comment for asking "difficult" questions about the state of affairs in Goomalling and making negative comments about how things are being done. I got kicked off too eventually, I presume for "liking" these comments. (I like comments on social media not necessarily because I agree with them but because I think they are significant and want to encourage the social media algorithm to show them in more people's feeds).

I don't think all Goomalling councillors treat their constituents like this but it highlights a disturbing monopoly on communication that the Shire of Goomalling have in this community that doesn't exist in most communities.

So I set up a Facebook page and a website where all issues can be discussed contentious or otherwise and to explore the feasibility of starting a Ratepayers Association - hence the title "working party". I'm planning for the rest of 2021 to put the business systems in place to start such an association with the least amount of hassle should it be decided to be a good idea.

First thing was to set up a Facebook page that people could use to discuss

Shire social media posts, run polls and have comment on general issues. I'd hoped to be able to #tag all the posts so that people further on down the track can search past posts by subject matter. Unfortunately, it only works to a certain extent, while Facebook groups the posts together, it seems to archive a random version of any particular post rather than the latest version with all the comments.

I also commissioned a logo for the group, which I know people hate but we just need to have something to start off with. It actually is quite good and I got the Pakistani man who designed it to fix the spelling mistake but as soon as I was asking him to draw a custom picture to be more Goomalling relevant he suddenly lost the ability to speak the English language. You live and learn.

I've run a full page ad in last weeks Endeavour for a competition for a replacement logo. Hopefully something will turn up from that.

As many of you will know, particularly those that have signed up for this newsletter, I have started work on a website - [www.GoomaRates.com](http://www.GoomaRates.com). At the moment this is being used for storing some sample constitutions of similar groups elsewhere that I would urge you to have a look at sometime. Also some temporary objectives of what such an association might do. Also a space that keeps a record of emails and letters sent by the working party. Most importantly there are a series of password protected forums there where people can discuss things using a pseudonym that they may not feel comfortable about discussing on the Facebook page. This has been moderately successful with the caveat that if you post something you need to keep checking back to see if anybody else has actioned the item or commented.

PM me if you would like me to set you up with a userid for the private forums.

In the future I am hoping to add financial records and a searchable database of specific issues, ie the Facebook page is for general discussion, the database will be for actual case studies. Hopefully in the long run, the Facebook page and the website will prove to be a great resource for everyone.

Michael Sinclair-Jones of the Toodyay Herald has kindly offered us a regular space to contribute articles. I elected not to this week as I figured it would be best to wait until things were a bit more stable.

I could go on, but I won't. Catch you next month.

Adam

Working Party Spokesperson