

Ian Powell – District Wide Councillor Candidate

Economic Development

- 1. What is your understanding of the Kotahitanga Board and the role that they play? Should they be independent?** The Kotahitanga Board is the Independent Economic Development Board for KCDC. It has an important role in overseeing the implementation of the Coast's economic development strategy plan for 2020-23. Appropriately it was developed in partnership with iwi and other key stakeholders and with public consultation. I am sympathetic to the relationship between Kotahitanga and KCDC moving from one of formal control by the latter to partnership between two independent entities sharing similar objectives. The intent would be to let greater autonomy lead to more creativity.
- 2. Kāpiti Chamber values town centres as vital contributors to our local economic system. What examples of benefits have you seen from town centres?** Town centres are valuable contributors to the Kāpiti economy but this can be further enhanced learning from some good experiences. It is a long way from Kāpiti but I was struck visiting small towns and villages in rural Bolivia some years ago with the role of their town squares. They were like hubs providing the heart of their communities. Reinforced by some iconic features, they were a place for community interaction. Raumati provides a village-like hub for its wider community. There is potential for more of this in all our towns. Even the main street entrance in Paekakariki has elements of a hub although that would have been stronger if the old Paekakariki pub was still around. Increasing community interaction increases vibrancy which increases economic activity.
- 3. How do you plan to support and grow town centres, and their relationship to the economic development team and wider business community?** One of my biggest planks is empowering communities so a starting point would be tapping their local knowledge and insights through, or with, the Kotahitanga Board over what might work best for town centre hubs. The approach should be as bottom-up as practical. Town centre planning needs to be based around uniqueness. That is, special character features including specialty businesses. A promising example is Raumati with its fashion shops. Town centres should offer a mix of experiences such as markets (the existing weekend markets suggest good potential here), green spaces and playgrounds. Accessibility through good public transport links and car parking will be important. Financial incentives, particularly for start-up, and efficient resource consent processes are both important. Town centre development should be linked to expanding tourism. This would also require greater interconnectivity between Kāpiti's towns.
- 4. What is your understanding of the purpose of the Tourist Advisory Board and their relationship with Wellington NZ and KCDC?** The Tourism Advisory Board was established earlier this year by the Kotahitanga Board which, while independent, was created by KCDC. It is a very good initiative. Its role is to develop and implement a tourism plan for the Kāpiti Coast. To do this well it will need to develop robust

partnerships with local and national tourism stakeholders. The relationship with KCDC is very direct. It is a relationship that needs to be based on shared purpose and values; relational rather than contractual. Similarly this should be the relationship with Wellington NZ given its tourism role for the wider Wellington region. It should go without saying that the Board will need to work closely with Kāpiti businesses, including involving them in the implementation of the tourism plan.

- 5. What are the opportunities around tourism in Kāpiti?** Tourism has enormous potential given the nature and beauty of the Coast while recognising the need to be environmentally sensitive and respectful. This includes Kāpiti Island, the various beaches, hiking, biking, nature reserves (Nga Manu), the Ōtaki and Waikanae rivers, escarpment, parks, picnicking, horse riding, Whareroa Farm, Southwards and the smaller local museums, and rail opportunities such as the QE11 Park tram and Steam Incorporated in Paekakariki. Hopefully the innovative Whale Song project might become another opportunity. We need a focussed tourism strategy (perhaps including 'taste of Kāpiti' tours). Any strategy must include addressing the accommodation shortage, developing town centres, and upgrading opportunities mentioned above (arguably beginning with rivers). Perhaps the strategy could include promoting dog friendly accommodation given increasing canine popularity? Along with construction, tourism arguably has the biggest potential to further develop the Kāpiti economy. The tourism strategy, with active KCDC support, should reflect this.

Better Infrastructure

- 6. What role do you think KCDC plays in the Peka Peka Interchange?** Responsibility rests with Waka Kotahi as New Zealand's transport agency. However, KCDC does have an important advocacy role in the interests of residents that would benefit by the interchange, as it does for other parts of accessibility on and off the expressway. This forceful advocacy will inevitably be behind 'closed doors'. But, in the interests of transparency, credibility with Kāpiti's population, and to enhance the effectiveness of KCDC's overall advocacy, it should also be in the public arena
- 7. KCDC has been making strategic housing purchases. What are your thoughts on KCDC as a housing provider or facilitator? What does intensification mean to you, and how do you think it could change Kāpiti?** I strongly support KCDC facilitation and advocacy for affordable and safe housing provision. This should include partnering (alliances) with central government (Kāinga Ora and the Ministry of Social Development), land developers and the construction industry. Strengthening Council resource consent processes needs to be looked at. I am apprehensive about KCDC being a provider of housing because of the extra capabilities and resources required to undertake such a big responsibility. The principle of intensification of housing is endeavouring to build more upwards and less outwards. I agree but it isn't a black and wide issue. In the specific context of the new legislation, Council's approach should be to ensure that building upwards a bit more doesn't get compromised by unreasonably small surrounding section space. It will also be important to earmark

iconic special character areas (not to be confused with 'not in my neighbourhood' thinking).

- 8. As it stands, KCDC has funding to move forward with Te Uruhi. This has been a big talking point in our business community and membership. Assuming it goes ahead, what impact do you foresee the gateway having on business and community wellbeing in the Kāpiti region?** I'm very skeptical that the Gateway project will deliver business and community wellbeing in the Kāpiti region, particularly in its current format and location. I respect the aspirations behind Te Uruhi but unfortunately it has not been sufficiently well-thought out. I'm not convinced that it will attract enough visitors to the Coast to make it viable. KCDC does need to address biosecurity at the beach and it does need to further support the rich Māori history and culture that is central to what Kāpiti is. Hotel accommodation in Paraparaumu beach would do more for bringing visitors to the Coast and a good tourism strategy would do even more. Read my fuller response to Te Uruhi in the following KC News link: <https://www.kcnews.co.nz/2022/08/07/ian-powell-new-council-must-put-gateway-on-hold/>.
- 9. What do you think are the opportunities for business if the Kāpiti Airport stays an airport, or if it gets developed?** I'm attracted to an airport in Kāpiti but it requires a robust financial analysis of what is required to maintain and develop this and of its realistic benefits to the Coast. This should include the role of and current dependency on KCDC funding. It might be that this could be linked to a good tourism strategy. I believe there is a role for KCDC to advocate to government for a national airways plan that reaches populated areas like Kāpiti.

Future thinking

- 10. What actions should KCDC be taking to support businesses to become climate friendly?** KCDC should encourage and support for businesses to a mantra of reduce, reuse or recycle. This encompasses an extensive range of measures. These include use waste in creative ways or dispose in environmentally friendly ways; sourcing sustainable materials; conserving water beginning by identifying any leaks; reducing energy costs such as by investing in energy efficient appliances, natural light (or LEDs); donating still useful furniture and equipment that are being replaced or are no longer required; reducing single use items (such as plastics); recycling and composting measures; and reusable office supplies. Businesses should also be encouraged and supported to partner with environmental organisations. For its credibility with businesses it is important that that KCDC leads by example. Looking at whether waste collection could be more climate friendly and reviewing green-waste charges to incentivise greater use are both areas worthy of investigation.
- 11. How do you envision the relationship between local iwi and KCDC operating in the future?** This relationship is critical to the Coast not just because of the Treaty of Waitangi, but also because of the rich contribution that Māori history and culture has provided to make Kāpiti what it is. It should be relational rather than contractual. The relationship should recognise that iwi is unlikely to be sufficiently resourced to meet some of the objectives agreed with Council. At the same time

- 12.** KCDC should recognise that its effectiveness in working for all residents benefits from a robust iwi relationship. It should also recognise the importance of hapu in this relationship.
- 13. Summarise your understanding of the following reforms: Three Waters Reform and Local Government Reform. How do you plan to keep Kāpiti's voice strong throughout these changes and advocate for our business community?** Sitting behind Three Waters reform is justified public health concerns with existing drinking, waste and storm water. It is a national as well as local issue. Kāpiti residents don't just drink Kāpiti water; they drink water when they travel out of Kāpiti. Unfortunately it has lost its way by excessive centralisation and the absence of democratic governance and accountability. I have discussed this further in KC News: <https://www.kcnews.co.nz/2022/08/14/responding-to-the-three-waters-challenge/> . The Government's working party to review reforming local government should focus on what works best to put the needs of communities at the heart of planning and delivery. But it will fail if, as with Three Waters, it becomes preoccupied with centralisation and disregards the importance of democratic governance and accountability. If elected, I will push for Council advocating 'below-the-radar' with central government and in public that any structural change is 'fit-for-purpose' and should not compromise democratic governance and accountability.
- 14. What is your vision for Kāpiti, and how do you intend to implement it? Name three visionary actions you aspire to implement?** KCDC should strengthen its advocacy by becoming a strong voice for good access to extensive high quality healthcare services. Start with developing a stocktake on what is needed. Then engage directly with Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) on how best they should be provided. Enhancing the empowerment of communities to better influence the quality of Council decision-making such as in climate change, healthcare access and infrastructure development. Community engagement is much more than formal consultation; it is empowerment. Empowerment should become 'business as normal'. Ensuring that the effect on climate change is a litmus test for KCDC decision-making. If a proposal has a positive effect on the climate it has higher priority; if it has a neutral effect then lower priority (subject to other merits); if it has a negative effect then proceed no further. Again this should become part of 'business as normal'.
- 15. How do you plan on being a visible and accessible leader for our council and community?** Being a visible and accessible leader has been my 'bread and butter' for over 30 years working in the health system. This was achieved by means such as regular direct communications to medical specialists, regularly meeting and engaging with them including at their workplaces, and actively engaging with health managers and the health ministry. It was reinforced by a high media profile. Of all the experiences and skills I can bring from the health system to KCDC, visibility and accessibility are the most easily portable.