

3.9 STONEHAM PARK

3.9.1 DESCRIPTION

Stoneham Park is situated off Peter Lippa Drive in the south west part of town. Private housing borders the northern boundary with a farm owned by Ngati Tuwharetoa Holdings Ltd to the south. Further housing and the main entrance off Peter Lippa Drive border the western boundary. Along its eastern boundary, Stoneham Park adjoins the rear of the Kowhai Park residential estate. A pedestrian access runs north east from Stoneham Park along the Kowhai Park boundary to Fenton Mill Road.

Pedestrian access is also available from an alleyway off Valley Road and the main vehicle entrance point is off Peter Lippa Drive. Pedestrian access through all gates is unrestricted.

Stoneham Park is available for use by the public for passive recreation but would appear to be most frequently used as a pedestrian shortcut between Peter Lippa Drive and Fenton Mill Road. Stoneham Park is a designated dog exercise area.

Stoneham Park offers the usual infrastructure of utility services including water, sewerage, electricity and irrigation.

All soils in the area are of a very recent origin and mainly associated with eruptions from the Okataina Caldera; most are rhyolitic pumice with the exception of the last ash shower which was alkaline Basaltic scoria from the Tarawera eruption. The rhyolitic sub soils are freely drained but of only moderate to low fertility and the basaltic scoria, while much more fertile, has yet to break down to form real soil. The dark colour of the scoria combined with the high sunlight levels of the region can give rise to natural desiccation which can cause difficulties in establishing tree species and maintaining a quality turf cover on playing surfaces.

No native species of trees survived the early subdivision development and the entire flora on Stoneham Park has been introduced. There were specimens of Maple, Plane and Willow scattered predominantly around the boundary.

3.9.2 HISTORY

In 1981 a new subdivision was commenced by the Housing Corporation of New Zealand to cope with an influx of new residents working at the expanding mill. Situated on the south western side of the town and being some distance from existing parks and reserves. This Crown land at the time had a proclamation that further parks and reserves in the area would be developed. One of these sites was some 13 acres and became known as Ballantrae Reserve.

In the 1980s the Kawerau Town Soccer Club was looking for new grounds as Boyce Park could only provide one full-sized soccer field. The land at Ballantrae Reserve presented an ideal venue for soccer with as many as four fields being possible. Clubrooms were also required but the land had not yet been vested in the then Kawerau Borough Council by the Crown. The Kawerau Town Soccer Club purchased a neighbouring property to use as its clubrooms. There were showers and changing facilities on the ground floor with the club room with kitchen facilities on the floor above.

The four soccer fields became so popular at weekends that junior soccer games were being pushed aside to allow as many senior games to take place as possible. In 1981 a further half hectare of land between Stoneham Park and the Kowhai Park residential estate was vested in Council as a Recreation Reserve and consequently added to Stoneham Park's overall area. This allowed the addition of two soccer pitches to be permanently marked for junior soccer.

In 1982 some 4.8 hectares was set out with level pegs with a one-way fall of two metres in total length, from south to north. This area was then levelled to the pegs and compacted, moving some 15,000 loose metres of soil. Four thousand cubic metres of top soil was then introduced and the entire area grassed.

Following the death of the then Mayor Roy Stoneham, Ballantrae Reserve was renamed Stoneham Park in May 1983.

An irrigation pipe was installed on the Eastern boundary in the 1980s and an aluminium shed was erected to house the pump controls and store soccer equipment.

The aluminium shed and pump controls were removed around 2007 as the soccer club no longer required the use of the field.

Stoneham Park was vested in the Kawerau District Council for recreation purposes under the Reserves Act on 2 April 1998.

In around 2000, underground irrigation reticulation lines were installed in parts of the field to improve irrigation.

Following amalgamation of the soccer club with another club, the soccer club building which was located on a private section adjoining the park was sold to a private individual in 2008 and converted into a house. Soccer playing consequently relocated to Tarawera Park and Firmin Field. Also at around that time, a number of large trees on the reserve were removed due to complaints from adjoining property owners.

In 2009, Council deemed the park a passive reserve in terms of maintenance and decreased the frequency of mowing.

A Council reserve review conducted in 2010 indicated that there was no apparent current demand for Stoneham Park. This led Council to consider if disposal of the reserve would be acceptable.

3.9.3 STATUS

Stoneham Park is vested in and administered by the Kawerau District Council. The park is a Recreation Reserve as defined by the Reserves Act 1977.

The legal description is:

Lot 39 DPS 27247 Recreation Reserve and
Lot 1 DPS 54056 Recreation Reserve

The total area of Stoneham Park is approximately 5.9826 hectares in size.

Stoneham Park is zoned Reserve under the Kawerau District Plan.

3.9.4 POLICIES

Landscape Character

1. The informal integrity of the Reserve shall be retained.
2. Ground maintenance shall be to a standard appropriate to the various recreational users of the Park.

Vegetation

1. Sound horticultural techniques shall be applied in the management of Stoneham Park's turf and trees.
2. Specimen trees on the Reserve shall be maintained and developed but consideration may also be given to shading problems over private residential properties.
3. Prior to removal of any vegetation, its historic, ecological and aesthetic merit must be assessed against the goal of removal.

Access/Parking

1. Stoneham Park, other than marked playing areas, is a designated dog exercise area.
2. Limited vehicle access to the Park is permitted from time to time.

Golf

1. Golf is allowed to be practiced on Stoneham Park.