

*The Friends of the Park at 125 – 129 Packe Street Inc.  
(Packe Street Park & Community Garden)*

*Submission on the  
Long Term Council Community Plan  
(Our Community Plan)  
2006 – 2016*

*From*

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*The membership of our group comprises 17 households and one society. However there are volunteer gardeners who are not members and of course many many people use the garden and pick its produce without formally joining "The Friends". That the park/community garden is very well used is to us a sign of how it is appreciated and indeed, loved. So we choose to speak for the "users" too.*

*Our submission refers to the "Summary Version"  
We wish to talk to the main points of our written submission*

## **Introduction**

“The Friends of the Park at 125 – 129 Packe Street Inc.” (ie the Friends of Packe Street Community Garden) thank the Council for the opportunity to make this submission. During our 10 years as a legal entity and a volunteer working group we have appreciated the Council’s generous contributions towards and benign oversight of all our endeavours. We feel that we have been most fortunate in having the goodwill of Council, the Shirley/Papanui Community Board, the St Albans Residents’ Association and of the many Council officers and City Care staff who have helped us over the years.

In return we feel that we have worked hard to justify this level of support. Ours is one of the very few Community Gardens (if not the only one, amongst the 12 in and around Christchurch – see attached pamphlet) that has no paid coordinator/gardener. The garden provides, fruit, vegetables, flowers and herbs for anyone to pick and depends on a very small core group of regular volunteer gardeners augmented by occasional help from Volunteering Canterbury, organised neighbourhood working bees and the Department of Corrections to keep going. As well as providing a friendly, aesthetically pleasing neighbourhood focus, the garden gives creative opportunities to our young people and is a safe place for people from different cultures to meet, greet and get to know each other. For the last decade it has provided a local composting facility for kitchen waste, grass clippings and small prunings. In the face of opposition to their very presence by an “old-mind-set-developer” we have managed to so far retain the park’s three “big trees” for roosting birds. These are a precious asset in our increasingly intensified part of St Albans with its scarcity of mature trees.

### **“A vision for our future” page 6 – 7**

It seems that the LTCCP is very much a “business as usual” plan; it does not explicitly acknowledge that a changed reality is already upon us in the form of drier weather, reduced water quality and higher energy costs. Already we are feeling the effects of drier seasons, a degradation of rivers and streams, higher energy heating and transport costs and increasing social tension.

### **“Council’s proposal to save money on its services” page 8**

To cope with the above changes there will need to be much more emphases placed on strengthening local communities than is evident in this LTCCP.

In fact the suggestion that community facilities such as halls, libraries and pools should be closed runs absolutely counter to what is necessary. Basic community facilities, from our point of view are at least as important as the “City Mall renovation: \$10.3 million” and a “Fit out for new Civic Offices: \$4.3 million.

We do however agree with the proposal to “Reduce the number of issues per year of the council’s publication, City Scene” because most of what appears in this publication we have already read in the local press.

**“Community support” page 10**

We wholeheartedly agree with the statement that what we want are “Strong and inclusive communities and opportunities to meet and socialise”.

Having directly experienced the positive effect of our special park/reserve on community building/development, welcoming/nurturing newcomers from different cultures and intergenerational respect we would urge the council to add to its list;

- “By providing opportunities for the establishment of community gardens in partnership with neighbourhood entities”.

Community gardens provide a neutral place where it is safe to make casual acquaintances and develop shared interests. They help people who have hitherto lived, for example, in high rise city apartments or desert refugee camps – in environments very different from suburban/urban Christchurch – to form an attachment to their new land.

It may even be possible to revamp some of the aforementioned community halls by locating a community garden in their vicinity should there be a strong enough inclination and commitment in that particular neighbourhood to do so.

Following on from this request is another relating to language:

**“What achievements will show our success?” page 14**

We who enjoy our reserves and shared green spaces and places are **not the Council’s “customers”**. We are citizens – just as our councillors and council staff are citizens too.

As community gardeners and supporters of our own community garden we appreciate the concept of sustainable development and demonstrate this as best we can through our own practice. We believe that “Our Community Plan” would fit us better for the next decade if it acknowledged and articulated the changes we will need to make as citizens (individually and jointly) to cope well – in a healthy and dignified way – with the external pressures increasingly imposed upon us and to some extent caused by our own intransigence.