

View from the Chair

Pete Jones



Sunny, strategic outlook

St Heliers Bay is one of Auckland's most beautiful and desirable suburbs – with a town centre to match.

According to local business association chair, Pete Jones, *pictured*, St Heliers offers a warm and welcoming village community which makes for a popular choice for a day out in Auckland.

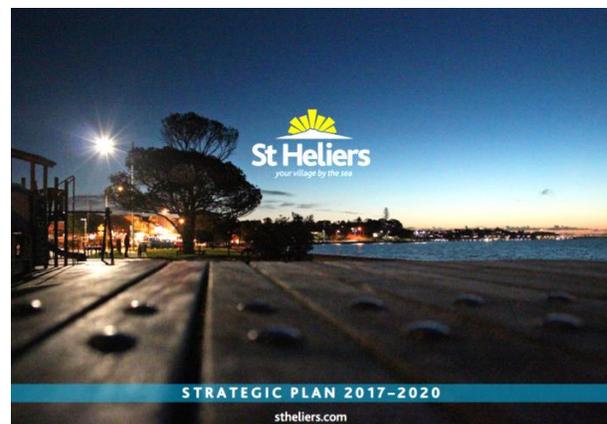
“Our town centre has a unique character, flowing from the residents who treasure the village-like atmosphere, and offers a wide range of choices for boutique shopping and relaxing dining,” says the local businessman who owns the Village Co-op café on Maheke Street.

“The white sandy beach, as well as ease of parking and access to public transport, makes St Heliers Bay an ideal shopping, dining and leisure destination.”

The business association has operated a BID programme since 1995, refining the model over the past 22 years while re-defining its brand.

“Long-time town centre manager Wendy Caspersonn stepped down in late 2016 and, as a result, gave us the opportunity to review our strategic direction and processes.

“We recognise the strategic plan is all about the key principles of accountability, democracy and owning your own destiny,” Pete says.



A [strategic plan](#), which sets the direction of the St Heliers Village, is one of the policy requirements of the BID programme.

“In January 2017, we interviewed St Heliers Village businesses to better understand their current needs and, more importantly, to gather information to inform the future strategic direction of the St Heliers Village.”

Questions covered the following topics; participant information, issues and opportunities, improvements, business association performance, communication and branding.

In his introduction to the strategic plan, Pete said St Heliers Village was experiencing a shift in demographics and stiff retail competition from online stores.

“This provides a timely opportunity to shift the village’s strategic direction with a focus on attracting and growing consumer and visitor numbers. Smart marketing of the scenic attributes of the village, alongside promoting the unique owner-operated shopping experience, can potentially put St Heliers Village at the heart of the Auckland experience.

“The board, on behalf of its members, has taken a lead role in establishing a level of interest/opportunity in new initiatives, and what the association should focus on and understanding the challenges and opportunities facing businesses in the area, and business owners’ concerns, issues and opportunities,” he wrote.

The board, made up of volunteers from the village business community and chaired by Pete for the past two years, is responsible for successfully leading its local BID programme activities.

“For greater local outcomes, the association advocates on behalf of the village to the Ōrākei Local Board which also share goals that include economic prosperity, community identity and pride. We work closely with our liaison representative from the board, [Ros Rundle](#).

“Alex Shaw is our acting manager and she is working on key objectives to improve a clean, safe and secure environment for our customers,” says Pete.

Alex recently launched a new website which features interviews with local businesspeople, personalities and politicians – including [Councillor Desley Simpson](#) and [Local Board Chair Colin Davis](#) – as well as local Community Constable Todd Martin who clearly loves his beachside beat.

“When we complete our requirements for social media, we will put our manpower needs in place,” says Pete.

“We’re focused on growing business, increasing customer numbers and making this a more desirable place for local businesses and our customers.”

With the sun featuring in its logo, St Heliers Village clearly has a bright outlook on the future.

