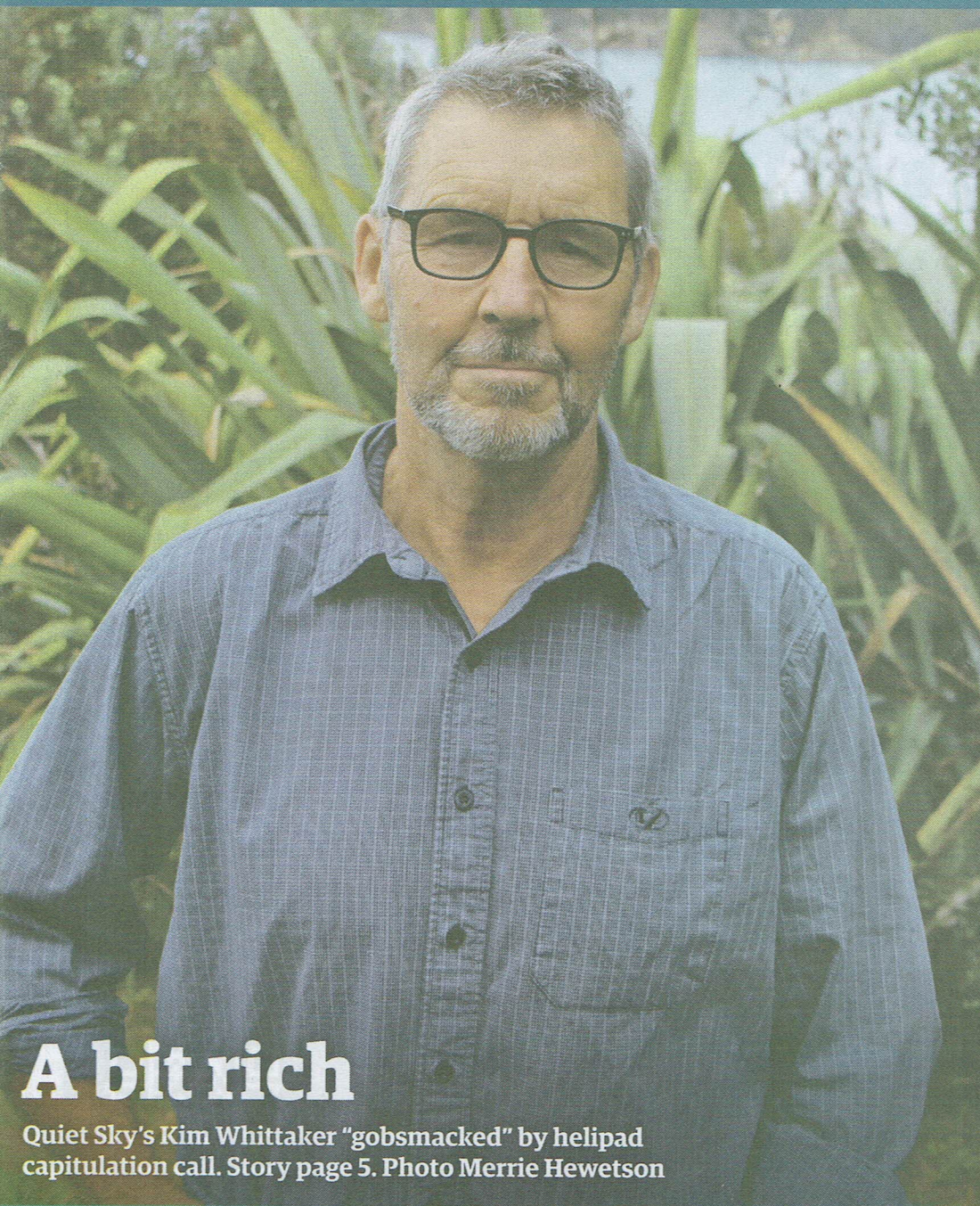


GULF NEWS

19 May 2022

WAIHEKE'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1973

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A bit rich

Quiet Sky's Kim Whittaker "gobsmacked" by helipad capitulation call. Story page 5. Photo Merrie Hewetson

A gulf between



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Winning ways



Jack Harte in action in our bumper sports section • P 43



Brooke Hamilton

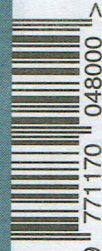


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Activist thinks helipad surrender call a bit rich

A Waiheke activist is "gobsmacked" that an Auckland councillor seems to have suggested that helipad reform would be too risky in the face of potential legal challenges from the wealthy. However, the councillor argues considering that risk is simply due diligence.

Quiet Sky Waiheke member Kim Whittaker says there is widespread support from the general public, the Waiheke Local Board and the Auckland Helicopter Trust for reforming helipad consent rules. Those changes would address concerns over excessive noise and safety with the rapid increase in new helipads on Waiheke, when there are already around 50 on the island.

So he's surprised and disappointed that Councillor Linda Cooper has said the issues, and the interaction between Auckland Council and Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulations, were complex and the council was restricted in what it could realistically do.

"We cannot go to court with this. The people who would oppose us making this prohibited have very deep pockets," she said. The council needs to use its limited court expenditure budget solely on cases it knows it can win - and Cooper said wealthy people "will fight to the ends of the earth to do what they want to do" with their helipads.

Cooper's remarks were made at a meeting of the council's Planning Committee on 5 May, as it responded to resolutions from the Waiheke, Aotea/Great Barrier

and Waitematā Local Boards related to helicopter activity.

Kim says it was a positive meeting overall, with Mayor Phil Goff and the councillors willing to acknowledge there was a problem and look into the reports to see what changes could be made to the District Plan rules around helipad consents.

However, he felt Cooper's comments undermined that, especially since she chairs the council's Regulatory Committee.

Kim says it seemed to confirm long-held suspicions among activists and community groups that the rich had an outsized influence on council decisions.

"It's pretty gobsmacking for a councillor to come right out and say it."

"[Cooper is] basically saying if you've got enough money, then forget democracy... and you don't even need to spend it, just the threat of having it is enough to get what you want over the majority's wishes."

Councillor Cooper says she wasn't suggesting the council avoid making changes at all but was raising potential litigation costs as part of the due diligence required when considering regulatory change.

She meant it as a reminder for the councillors to consider their options and ensure any changes were legally airtight or unlikely to be challenged.

Cooper says with issues like this, giving one side or another everything they want often leads to the other side taking the



Quiet Sky's Kim Whittaker is 'gobsmacked'. Photo Merrie Hewetson

council to court.

"Extremes never last, the pendulum always swings back to the middle... [and] we need to steward ratepayers' money"

It was better to find compromises acceptable to all parties right off the bat, because it can get costly when the council fails to strike the right balance.

For example, Cooper says a recent issue over a single tree cost \$500,000 in court costs and the ongoing legal challenges to the Local Alcohol Policies from the supermarkets continue to consume large amounts of ratepayers' money. •

Paul Mitchell

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WAIHEKE WEATHER 9 - 15 MAY 2022

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	WEEKLY TOTAL	MONTH TO DATE	MONTH HISTORIC
WAI	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	4.0	110.5
AUCK	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	4.5	6.5	145.8
WAI	20.5°	21.2°	19.5°	19.0°	19.1°	20.0°	19.7°	19.9°	21.0°	18.6°
AUCK	19.7°	20.8°	19.6°	20.1°	19.5°	18.3°	20.2°	19.7°	21.0°	18.4°
WAI	13.4°	9.8°	8.4°	10.5°	13.4°	15.5°	17.3°	12.6°	13.4°	11.8°
AUCK	12.4°	7.3°	5.5°	6.4°	12.1°	14.5°	17.9°	10.9°	11.4°	10.8°

Data by WeatherWise Auckland: 020-4023-0106

WAIHEKE MONTHLY RAINFALL

