

## The Christchurch Residential Red Zone



Hayley Guglietta was our guest speaker for our Monday 18 March 2024 monthly meeting. She is vivacious and a great speaker. She explained in detail about the restoration that has been happening along the Avon River over the last four years. In fact the genesis of the project began when the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Agency was in full operational mode, and the Avon Ōtakaro Network was initiated by Evan Smith together with a group of enthusiasts – Katherine Peet, Tom McBrearty, Di Madgin and many others.

In the beginning, there were many obstacles to be overcome – political, local, social and economic, however a steadfast determination to make it happen together with a

commitment to involve communities as much as possible, made it happen.

Using a diagrammed map of the Avon River and its ecological diversity, Hayley demonstrated the way the river and its banks will be transformed into a walking/cycling natural reserve out to the sea. She explained how the team worked to encourage first LINZ and then the City Council to take original properties into account when removing houses, leaving established trees and shrubs where possible and refraining from fencing everything other than the external boundary.

Over time, the Network has involved local residents in decision-making and several projects that enhance their locations. An adventure playground, several food production areas, a City to Sea shared pathway are only a few of their initiatives.

Rowing, Hayley explained is a popular sport along the Avon River and there is a proposal to create a water loop at Kerrs Reach so that rowers will have a 2km training stretch of water. There are many stormwater ponds which make for a good wetland area and the team organise regular clean-up working bees, sorting and photographing their efforts. Since October 2022, they have collected 5 tonnes of rubbish from the river, sorted it and recycled 50 per cent of it.

Hayley was warmly congratulated on her excellent talk with our expressed support for the project's success.

(The Avon Ōtakaro Network has a website [www.avonotakaronetwork.org.nz](http://www.avonotakaronetwork.org.nz) if anyone is interested in knowing more.)