

Busy doing nothing!!!!

Now in July and winter has eventually started here – storms and colder. Having re read Dereks' last missive it strikes me that we are in a hugely different place now than then. Yes if you have not already worked it out Steph is taking to the production of the missive this time, perhaps a sign of the times and I have time and the inclination to communicate. In part my world has changed most out of us both.

So the last missive the plan was to go to alert level 2 in two weeks. Now we are well and truly in level 1. Derek and I both gained a great deal from working from home. As I work more hours I was up and working at 7am so I could finish by 4pm so we could have a walk/cycle in the light. For the whole of the working from home period the weather decided we needed sun so we could have a break from the house, how good was that.



From level 2 we could go back to work with social distancing but neither of our jobs wanted us.

We had to keep our distance on the ferry. Work wanted to start with low

numbers and those who were as productive at home were asked to stay there. Oddly both my staff went into the

office – one because his own laptop broke so his productivity really went down. The other because she was desperate and finding it hard to be home. She also got a lift in every day so could avoid public transport. We really watched the numbers – 1pm was stop and watch the live update and watch for the bounce for two weeks. But it didn't bounce. Any new cases were due to travel or known groups (the last few stag nights and wedding parties). The Level 1 decision date was after the long Queens Birthday weekend – 1 July 2020.

More Business Continuity Planning about what we would do at level 1. Then core blimey a shock. We always get a week to organise ourselves ready for the next level. BUT NO. 2 July 2020 all go back to work!!! Now I was going in the office on the 2 July 2020 as we had interviews for a rehabilitation advisor. Currently out of a team of 5 we are 3 and we are just about to go to two so this was a really important recruitment. We got two that we would appoint – one we wondered about for my job (more later).

Derek and BNZ were happy for them to continue working from home, come into the office one day a week as a team and now that has progressed to two days a week. He is now official reduced to four days a week which means he travels to Wellington 2 days a week only.

Level 1 seems to have gone well. Wellington is still really quiet and businesses are struggling. Places like Petone, a

suburb is thriving. More people working locally and going out locally. Veterans' Affairs decided on a period of us all back in the office while they work out how we measure productivity. How do we know people are working well at home? I now know of 2 staff that have gone and got other jobs as Veterans' Affairs are being inflexible with hours!!!!

But what does it matter what Veterans' Affairs is doing as I am on my way out of that job. Because we were short on staff I offered to stay for 1.5 days a week as my new job at St John of God is only 3 days a week. Veterans' Affairs said yes and at the moment want me to help induct my replacement. I go into the office on a Wednesday and feel I am adding value and supporting my staff. Every time I am in I am reminded why I am leaving – so much un-used potential it is such a waste and drives me crazy. The other half day I do in hours as I pick up e-mails and deal with urgent stuff as it arrives!



So St John of God, I am even getting used to saying the name – try it! The view from the office. I am based in a 39 bed residential home for young disabled in Karori. There is an 11 bedded transitional unit in

Upper Hutt that I go to about once a month. Now

remember I said I work 3 days a week and I am the only therapist. I have about 2 whole time activities assistants – split over 4 people.



I have literally just come back from two days in Christchurch – big brother. Their unit is 60 bed and has a rehab team. I wanted to get ideas from them before I started to make any changes up here. Jack is a physio and is in my role down there – we have similar ideas and had great fun. The biggest inspirations were;

- You work in their home, they do not live in your office – make sure it feels like this.
- Putting a green sticky dot in residents progress notes every time they are enabled to participate in an activity important to them.
- It is all about participation – I need to buy a wii not an exercise bike.

So on Monday morning I have a list of things I want to buy and questionnaire for the resident about what they want to try first AND occupational therapy students to get organised as we have so much to do. I expect it comes across that I am excited by my new role and that it is a very functional role. Having been in an office for 4 years; a week can now include a day at hydrotherapy and a day

getting the train up the coast while the trains were still free. I also do lots of 1 to 1 activities, like trailing electric wheelchairs.

I mentioned the new job is in Karori. This is the reason why I nearly did not take the job. It is a 15 minute bus ride up hill all the way out of the city centre. This means it is not great for the residents getting out without transport and not convenient for me getting to work. So I brought a folding electric bike :).

The bike has been names – ‘Trigger’. Folding as we are not sure where we will live and if it is a train journey away I will need to fold it. The one I liked was only available in



Auckland so they posted it to me. Bright blue, slightly sad that they had no orange ones left. Electric bike sales have gone through the roof here, people not wanting to use public transport and roads being a bit quieter.

It is such fun and I got a ‘free helmet’. When that arrived it is bluetooth – I have indicators that flash on my head :) The residents love it – I am a Christmas Tree!!! The choice of bike was partly on weight as I have to take it up a flight of stairs on the ferry. First day went well, I could carry it up the stairs. Since we were out of lock down the

weather had decided it was allowed to rain. So it was my second day in the new job. You start pedalling and a hand helps push you up the hill. I am thinking I will not need a shower when I get to work as this is so easy. I am flowing past the botanical gardens and it was getting a bit harder work, until I stopped. Error 21. The bike was broken. So I had to walk up the hill in the rain, pushing the bike and arriving wet and late!!!! On the way up a lovely man on the identical bike stopped to see if he could help. He could not, well he did tell me how to turn my lights on. It was fine on the way downhill as it did have a tiny bit of power and basically I need none to get back to the ferry.

So the company had no idea what error 21 was but have sent me a new bike which is fab – except the pedals fell off one morning. They still have to pick up the old bike.

What having the bike means is that we have thought about where we could live.

If Derek gets one too it gives us a much bigger area to look in.



Talking of living we should get to building versus buying a house. All things house. So we definitely gave up the idea of building our own home. A quantity surveyor report means that it will cost more than we want to spend. We want to retire in 3 years time and we do not want to sink that much money into a house.

Also we have lost the passion, which you definitely need if you are going to build. There is no better time to build as builders have lost some work so are keen to take on jobs. BUT that would still be a year before we moved.

So the land is on the market – for the past two weeks. We currently have 4 people interested. 2 have talked to Johan. We have the only sea front land and have details plans, building consent and a quantity surveyors report. The market is currently very busy and positive just now. One person is just checking he will be able to insure the new house, that earthquake issue puts a question on insurance. If he can then he will offer. So watch this space in the next week.

So we have a search out for a 3 bed, 2 bath house that is



not on a flood plain. We are mainly looking up the Kapiti Coast. A 40 minute train journey. Not something we would want to do 5 days a week, but Derek is looking at 2 days a week and I am looking at 3 days

a week so that all seems more possible. It is definitely not living in Wellington but is more a town. We have looked at all sorts – terraces in Wellington to houses with a sea view up the coast.

Last weekend we supported regional tourism and had two

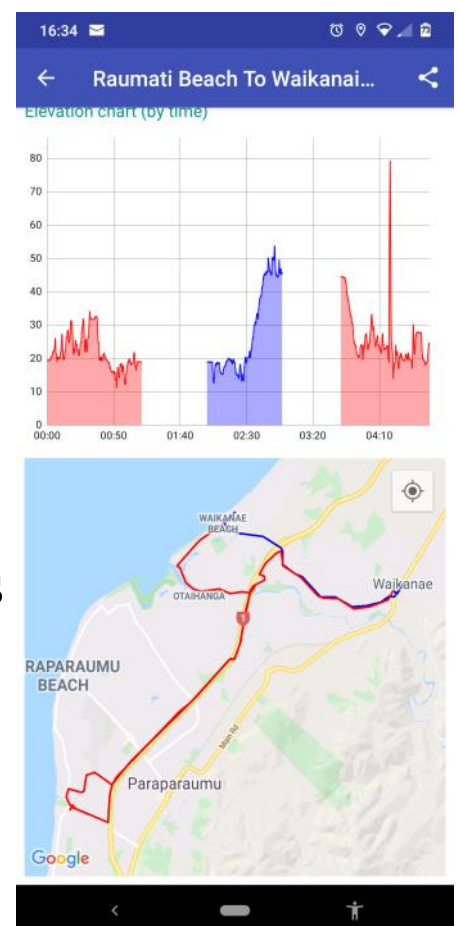
nights on the Kapiti coast. Friday we went up and cycled through the area nearer to Wellington. Something we had not done before. A great cycle path, rolling through the sand dunes. Stunning winter weather with divine coffee stops at one end. This is Raumati a smaller chic area to live, Derek would need an electric bike from here. I say smaller area but they have just opened a concert hall where the ballet and orchestra from Wellington will come



out to play. We stayed in a cottage which was not that insulated but was toasty with a heat pump and a wood burning stove. The place was chosen as it had a bath with the taps in the middle. We did not get out to try the local pub as we read curled up in front of the fire. We did notice that

accommodation prices have gone up by a third. Having discussed this with others this is not true throughout New Zealand

One the Saturday we cycled up the coast to Waikanae. Recently they have finished an express way, which includes a dedicated lit, tarmacked cycle path close but not on the express way. Perfect to get to boutique cinema at Waikanae. Waikanae is further from



Wellington and has some lovely restaurants. But we decided it was too far away – unless there is a really fab house we will not live this far out. The village is not as nice as we remembered.

Having cycled back to the car we sat in a café and looked at all the houses on our watch list to decide what we would view on the Sunday (the only day they seem to view here). The weekend before somebody at a midwinter party we went to had put us onto a great website to check if a house was on a flood plain/airport zone etc. So we ruled out some and chose the top 4 houses.

Then back up to Waikanae as Jay was having her 14 year old party. Catherine and Sarah had found a great place with a sleep out over the garage and a house to accommodate us adults, with the best wood burner. David was back from uni and they have two dogs. It was such a great place that met all those needs. They had cooked and we played cards and could all drink for a change. The best of evenings – I have to admit I was in bed at 9am after lots of fresh air, exercise and a bit of drink :).

The houses were interesting – nothing we would actually buy and a little demoralising as the housing stock is just so poor here. So \$650,000 and it is single glazed and the floor has some interesting sloping sections. We both found

one we liked but we rejected them both for one reason or another. We are not in a rush to buy and expect prices to go down the longer we wait. If we see something now we will buy as we hope this will be our last house purchase.

We have another four to see today (19/7/20). Having finally sold the barn in France and got that money to New Zealand we only have the land to sell and then we will have all the money to just buy. It was such a relief to sell the barn in France one less thing to be managing. It feels little like while you are working life is very complicated and you have to manage lots of things. When we retire we will have done all the time consuming financial and house stuff – when you have more time to do it.

With all the above mentioning of cycling we can report Derek's knee is much improved. He is actually seeing a physiotherapist now but it is really to prevent him dislocating his knee cap again. Again thinking of age it is a little about that you actually do specific exercises the keep your body going. You forget when you stopped squatting, you just started to do things in a different way.

We still seem to get one sunny day at the weekend and utilise it to cycle along the bays to the cinema. Interesting what we can get to see and thinking ahead when they will run out of new films to show at the cinema. We often

watch a film as it is on at the right time. I only regretted one and that at “Horrible Histories”. Bait, Knives Out and Love Sarah all had things to recommend them. The latter two would have been fine on the TV but not as much fun.



We have also been able to get back to going out for meals and to parties. One of our skype cards sessions has now become a dinner and cards with Fleur, Stephen and at times

Mark.

Fleur is a foodie so we all bring a course and have rather good food that night.

I believe after this meal we Derek and I went on to our new passion—winning at the card game 500. The skill we learnt over lock down.

Right time to sign of to view houses. Stay well in these difficult time and enjoy a little more freedom

Love Steph and Derek