

Hi There,

My name is Kees Zegwaard, and I've recently joined the Dutch Connection Museum Trust as their new Treasurer. I'd like to tell you a little bit about what I've learned over the past few months, because I think that this is an extremely important project for the Dutch Community in New Zealand.

I will also keep giving you lots more exciting news over the next few months – Since there are some big developments almost ready to be announced...

We'd like to tell as many people as possible about all the good news that will be heading your way. The Dutch Connection has been preparing a database of people of Dutch descent in NZ, to connect lots of people into this project. So if you have some friends who would like to go on our mailing list? Please send us their email address!

Why a museum in Foxton? Waarom Foxton?

In 2005, Maatje Kelderman of the Friendly Support Network Auckland realised that there was a story to tell about Dutch immigrants in New Zealand. She also noticed a lot of items the migrants took to NZ ended up on the kerbside, ready to be dumped or given away to the Sallies Shops. The idea came up to store those treasures in a museum somewhere in Auckland. This idea has now evolved into a national Dutch museum in Foxton.

Why Foxton? In 2006 the Dutch Connection Trust started a discussion to find out what people wanted and if indeed they wanted their own museum, and where? The Trust put a proposal for several locations to the Dutch Societies and everybody unanimously voted for Foxton. They wanted a site next to De Molen, as it is a well known icon that attracts over 30,000 visitors annually.

Initially it was a Dutch project only, but Tangata Whenua and then Horowhenua District Council (HDC) joined in with the idea to make it into a multicultural centre. HDC was prepared to help and even donate a site, and provide funding and expertise. There are now 6 parties involved (Te Taitoa Maori o Te Awahou, HDC, Library Trust, Flax Stripper Museum, River Trust and us) and in September 2010 a Trust deed was signed by these parties. Te Awahou – Nieuwe Stroom Trust (TANS), the project steering group for the project, started working on the project.

Planning - Onze Plannen

'Rome werd niet op één dag gebouwd.' And neither can you plan, set up and complete a project like this in a hurry! I hear sometimes that people think progress is too slow and that there isn't enough communication. Please remember that it took 10 years before The Windmill was up and running! And that the trustees are all volunteers, who give their time freely and travel a lot for the cause, mostly at their own expense.

The Dutch Connection Trustees have been busy attending meetings with authorities, visiting Dutch Societies and events, met with planners, museum directors and other experts and organised fundraisings events. Architect Pete Bossley has provided professional drawings for the buildings. Just recently we paid for a concept plan for the exhibition areas of our museum. (Thanks to a donation by the Wellington NZ NL Society.)

After the TANS agreement was signed in 2010, the whole project gained momentum. The 6 parties involved will share the same service areas. This makes the whole concept far more viable. The original costs for the entire Dutch Connection project have been reduced from \$6 to \$5 million. And what's more, we only need to raise \$1.5 million ourselves among the Dutch Community, for exhibitions etc. TANS will take care of the rest!

Communication – Nieuws en Presentaties

Last July I travelled 4000km in 14 days, with our Chairman Arjan van der Boon, to visit 6 towns in the South Island to tell people about the project. A report of this tour, written by our Ambassador Mr. Arie van der Wiel and Arjan, was published in HOLLAND FOCUS (a Dutch Australian/NZ magazine, attached to this email). We already did one presentation and are planning more presentations in the North Island.

We renamed November as *Koffiemaand* and a good number of people are in the process of organising a coffee morning at their place or their club to rally support for the project. A 12 minute DVD and an information pack are available, if you want to join in and invite people over for a coffee.

We'll Stay in Touch – We Houden Contact!

From here on in we will communicate as much as possible to keep you informed. For budgetary and practical reasons this is done by e mail. Again - If you know friends or family who want to receive our updates please send us an email with their details.

Tot nu toe hebben we een heleboel bereikt! And there are more exciting developments to be announced, before the end of this year and in early 2012.

The Trustees of the Dutch Connection Trust are Arjan van der Boon, Yolande van de Wetering, Jos Vroegop, Dick Kouwenhoven, Joost de Bruin and myself.

We'd like to thank Martina Drumm who has done a fantastic job as Treasurer for the last 5 years. I'm looking forward to finish the job that she started together with Maatje Kelderman and the other courageous members of the original Trust, all those years ago.

Groeten van Kees Zegwaard, Cambridge