

February 2021

## Power for the People!!



### **Christine Rupp, Chair, Counties Power Consumer Trust**

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This is an introduction to Counties Power Consumer Trust which holds the shares on behalf of all Counties Power consumers. The Trust was formed 25 years ago and has five trustees who are elected on a rotational basis. As Chair of the Trust, my plan is to update you with snippets of information regarding Counties Power, the Trust and electricity in general. The Trustees appoint the Directors of Counties Power and oversee the Company for the benefit and on behalf of the Consumers.

Bob Arvidson was the first Chair of the Trust and was instrumental in the formation of Energy Trusts from the previous local Franklin Electric Power Board. Bob was determined that the "Power would remain with the People" and not be sold off to corporates or become another government entity.

Some Trustees' experience in the electricity field spans over twenty years (including myself), so we've seen many changes overtime. The current Trustees all have business backgrounds and contribute widely in a variety of community activities. We all follow Bob's mantra that 'the power must stay with the people who reside in the Trust area'.

Recently Counties Power opened the state of art substation at Pokeno. This will meet the demands of the growing area in industrial, commercial and residential. This project has been recognised for its innovation and is a finalist in the New Zealand Energy Awards in the Network Initiative category to be announced early March. The Pokeno community were consulted over the project and invited to an open day to view the substation before it went live. Lots of fun was had by all and there was great feedback to Counties Power. See the video on the Counties Power website.

<https://www.countiespower.com/watch-us>

A tertiary education scholarship through First Foundation was set up in Bob Arvidson's name. First Foundation believes that all young people should have the opportunity to achieve their dreams, irrespective of socio-economic status.

The first scholarship awarded in 2018 went to Sophia Chen from Pukekohe High School and this has proved an excellent partnership for both parties. Sophia is in her third year of Bio-medical Engineering and Psychology at Auckland University and she is a real asset to Counties Power who provide scholarship funding and work experience for four years.



**Photo of Sophia working**



**At the awards ceremony: Christine Rupp (Trust Chair), Isabella Coughlan and Judy Nicholl, CE Counties Power**

The 2020 Scholarship was awarded by Counties Power to Isabella Coughlan from Pukekohe High School. It was a privilege to attend Isabella's Scholarship presentation with Judy Nicholl, Chief Executive of Counties Power. It was heart-warming to hear the stories of past graduates who attribute their success to First Foundation. If any businesses are interested to become sponsors, please email me and I will put you in contact with their CEO, Kirk Sargent.

**All Trustees - Alan Eyes, Phil Beston, Don Thompson, David Spratt and myself, are proud of Counties Power initiatives, it's employees and the achievements of the company.**

**As future initiatives unfold we will keep you informed - so watch this space!**