PRESS RELEASE – for immediate release 17.05.2023

Historic Tamahere cemetery relaxes access with new Dingle Memorial Berm

The creation of a memorial berm at the St Stephen's Tamahere cemetery will restore community members long unavailable access to the historic cemetery.

To be known as the "Dingle Memorial Berm" the area is for placement of memorial plaques only. It will be blessed as part of the St Stephen's 140th anniversary celebrations on 28 May, which all are invited to attend.

The cemetery was established in 1891. The donated land adjacent to the grounds of the first church (built 1883) was originally a burial ground for the people of the Tamahere district. It was and continues to be administered by a local cemetery committee appointed by the Anglican Diocese of Waikato via St Stephen's church vestry.

The new memorial berm is a response from the cemetery committee to address long-standing restrictions on access for burials and the interment of ashes. Explains Tamahere Cemetery Committee chairman Don Law: "We know from written history that the original church and cemetery were established by a wide range of people in the district. We know from talking to people present at the time the first church was burnt down in 1970 that the replacement church we have today only came about by the will of locals who felt it was important to keep a community church. We wanted to continue the inclusive record of St Stephen's so we have created the memorial berm."

Only a handful of burial plots remain in the graveyard area and access to this and the cemetery's ashes berm along the Airport Road boundary is limited to those who have had active involvement with the church for at least 10 years. However the new Dingle Memorial Berm access criteria is broader: "The person to be memorialized by a plaque on the new berm only needs to have a stated and recognized connection to the Tamahere area and/or St Stephen's Church," says Don Law. "We know our district is becoming more densely populated, and also there are a growing number of people who feel connected through the Tamahere Country Market and the many other ways in which the Anglican church reaches out to the community. We hope the new memorial berm will meet a need for those who want to leave an enduring memory of themselves right here in Tamahere."

The Dingle Memorial Berm parallels and has an entry point from the new cycleway along the south-west boundary of the cemetery. A naming stone for the berm has been donated by a church and cemetery stalwart, the late George Dingle. He was adamant it contain a representation of the distinctive and original St Stephen's iron cross. The naming stone will be unveiled on 28 May as part of the blessing of the new memorial plaque area by Archdeacon Sue Burns (vicar of St Stephen's) and Bishop Sir David Moxon.

This will be part of a morning of celebration of the St Stephen's 140th anniversary on 28 May. It will begin with a church service led by the Bishop David and include activities and information sharing about the district and church's past.

For more information please contact Tamahere Cemetery Committee members Don Law (chair) ph 021981770, Trish Houchen ph 0276081746 or the writer Marg Forde ph 0274743104