

Record consents keep building team busy

Ashburton District Council processed a record value of building consents in the 2021-22 financial year, issuing consents for building work valued at \$241.9 million.

Consents received for that period were valued at \$255.8m; that compares with \$212.6m last year.

Strategy and Compliance Group Manager Jane Donaldson said the 2014-15 financial year had set records with 1193 consents issued for work valued at \$165.1 million, but the latest financial year had exceeded that.

“The increase is the equivalent of about 100 extra houses on the previous year, so a new record has been set.”

In the past year 983 consents were issued, including 276 for new homes.

Ms Donaldson said Council had sent some consents to be processed by independent contractors but most were dealt with in-house by a team of 15.

“We processed just over half the number of consents (56.1%) within the 20 working day timeframe, but the sheer workload and extra processing time needed when building materials have been substituted because of supply chain shortages meant we couldn’t always meet it.

“We might process a house with brick on the outside and as we are about to issue the consent, the brick is swapped out for another cladding, so we have to re-process it.”



Council has been working with local builders to accommodate any changes as quickly as possible.

Ms Donaldson said consent-holders had a year to start building once the consent was issued, though that timeframe could be extended.

“Some consent-holders have already negotiated extra time to begin work, based on uncertainties around finance, building materials and titles.”

Council is expecting the consent boom to

continue at least until November, when new regulations around insulation come into force.

“To date, supply chain issues, inflation and increasing mortgage rates have not slowed consents coming in. Combine that with more compliance checking during the processing stage and there could be more delays. Our team members are working as hard they can processing and inspecting building jobs.”

There have been two milestones within

the building services team in the past year: Mike Farrell was acknowledged for carrying out more than 5000 inspections during his 15 years as a building official, and building services manager Michael Wong was made an associate member of the Ashburton branch of the Master Builders.

Mr Wong has attended Master Builders meetings for the past 10 years to keep local builders abreast of changes to the Building Code, and to help them understand how the consenting process works.

Hamish Riach, CE More qualify for rates rebates



The Annual Plan is signed and sealed for the new financial year, its final form influenced in part by more than 100 or so submitters who made their views known to council in the consultation phase.

While an average 9.4 per cent rate rise across the district might seem high, it is a realistic rise in order to keep providing the services that ratepayers expect. People said they did not want to see us doing less, and lobbied for more spending on footpaths and roads.

Councils up and down the country have struggled with their annual budgets this financial year, because inflation and covid uncertainties have pushed up prices.

Affordability is always top of mind for Councillors, so it was good news then to hear that Government has made some changes to the eligibility of low income households for rates rebates.

The Rates Rebate Scheme is a partial refund to ease rates bills for low income people. It provides financial relief for those who own their own home and live in it, and it includes people living in retirement villages, but does not apply to rental or holiday homes or commercial premises.

The maximum annual rebate has increased from \$665 to \$700. The abatement threshold increased from \$26,510 to \$28,080 income for the year to March 2022.

The increases mean more households in the Ashburton district will be eligible for assistance, helping them keep up with the cost of living. Call our customer services team if you think this applies to you.

Another important document under way is the pre-election report. This is a state-of-play report on our district, to help inform those thinking about standing in the coming local elections.

Annual Plan sets budget for roads, water, services

Ashburton District Council has adopted its Annual Plan 2022-23, confirming it will allocate an extra \$1.7 million to major roading repairs and do more work on drinking water and wastewater infrastructure to meet new national standards.



Money has also been re-prioritised from existing budgets for new footpaths, and Council will support the Rakaia Rugby Club via a loan for the club to develop a community recreation centre.

Mayor Neil Brown said Council had listened carefully to community feedback, which supported extra spending on roads.

“We’ve challenged budgets across all Council services to ensure only necessary work will be done, but we’ve included new work, like footpaths, asked for by some submitters.

“Setting the next year’s programme of work has been tough because of record inflation, covid uncertainties and revaluations which have had a big impact

on urban properties, but the end result is realistic and ensures work that needs to be done, will be done.”

The plan defers a \$450,000 upgrade of Balmoral Hall but allocates money to remedy kerb heights at EA Networks Centre, which are a tripping hazard.

The average rate rise across the district is 9.4 per cent, though it will vary depending on where ratepayers live.

“It is going to be an interesting year ahead. Council will be doing everything it can to stick to and deliver the work programme,” Mayor Brown said.

Council is also looking at other issues that arose from the consultation process, like playground access for the disabled.

Local faces front 2022 voter campaign

Local faces are fronting a campaign in the Ashburton district encouraging people to stand and vote in the local elections later this year.

Seven people, a mix of ages and backgrounds, agreed to take part in the campaign and they will appear on posters, advertising and social media in the lead-up to the elections.

Ashburton District Council Chief Executive Hamish Riach said the campaign features some well-known people, and their photographs were taken at various spots around the district.

“How better to encourage people to vote, than to highlight our own people and some of the things that are important to our district.”

Mr Riach said none of the people featured in the campaign were standing for a position themselves.

“But they are keen to lend their support to this important message, and highlight issues such as supporting the local economy, rural communities, opportunities for young people and looking after our environment.”

Alongside the campaign, the Council has also launched a new website for the election period - voteashburton.nz - that will provide information for voters and candidates.

Mid Canterbury voters will elect a mayor, nine district councillors, five Methven



Mark Douglas and Jorjia Davis are two of the local faces encouraging people to stand and vote in the local elections. Photographs by Tegan Clark.

Community Board members and six Braided Rivers Community Trust (formerly Ashburton Licensing Trust) members.

“Now’s the time to think of anyone who would be a good representative for the community on the Council, and encourage them to consider standing for election,” Mr Riach said.

The Council will be holding a free candidate information evening on Tuesday 19 July at 5.30pm to help potential candidates find out more about the election process and what’s involved with representing their community.

Later phases of the campaign will

encourage residents to vote, with staff at the Ashburton Public Library ready to help people change their details online, or register as new voters.

“Enrolment packs are hitting mailboxes now, so please check your details are up-to-date or if you haven’t received one, then you should make sure you’re enrolled.”

The election will be held by postal vote and voting papers and information about the candidates will arrive in mailboxes from 16 September. Voting closes on Saturday 8 October.

For more information about the elections, visit voteashburton.nz.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are at Council Chambers, 137 Havelock Street, unless specified

Local Election candidate information evening, Tuesday 19 July, 5.30pm

Methven Community Board, Monday 25 July, 10.30am, at Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Ashburton Water Zone Committee, Tuesday 26 July, 1pm (live-streamed)

Council meeting, Wednesday 27 July 1pm (live-streamed)

PUBLIC NOTICES

SMOKE-FREE FIRES

Winter is upon us, and we want everyone to be warm and cosy in their homes. A smoke-free fire means a warmer, cheaper fire – and cleaner air for us all to breathe.

Environment Canterbury has started its winter air campaign and is urging people to remember these three things to ensure a smoke-free fire:

- Use of dry, well-seasoned wood
- Adopting good burning technique
- Use of a modern, well-maintained burner.

Ensuring your wood is dry and well-seasoned is key to burning a hotter, more efficient fire with less smoke. It’ll also save you money as you’ll use less wood to achieve a better result.

See a list of Trusted Good Wood Merchants at warmercheaper.co.nz, and watch some video tips on burning "upside down", identifying when your chimney needs cleaning and learn how to stack like a pro.

Holiday fun at the Ashburton Public Library



There is plenty of fun in store for those visiting the Ashburton Public Library these school holidays.

On Monday 11 July, the library will host constellation card craft at 10.30am, and then at 7pm the Ashburton Observatory at Ashburton College will be open for night sky observation.

Seal ball and cup game craft will be the library activity at 10.30am on Wednesday 13 July, with a family movie night at 7pm.

On Friday 15 July, the 10.30am craft session will be creating bookmark toppers, with a board game evening at 7pm.

In the second week of the holidays, there

will be ping pong trick shots and marble mazes at 10.30am on Monday 18 July. On Wednesday 20 July, children will have a chance at 10.30am to play with food as well as eat it; a board game evening is scheduled for 7pm.

On Friday 22 July, children will be able to make a Matariki game at 10.30am, and take part in a family movie night at 7pm.

The star gazing will open happen if the weather is clear, so keep an eye on the library’s Facebook page for updates.

For further information, contact the library on 308-7192, email them at library@adc.govt.nz, or message them on Facebook.

Need help with your technique?

It’s doggy rego time!

It’s now time to register or re-register your four-legged friend.

Look out for the information pack in your mailbox or visit our website to register online.

Ashburton District Council
EXPIRES 30 JUNE 2023

0101

All dogs over the age of three months need to be registered by 31 July.

Ashburton District Council
ashburtondc.govt.nz

TAKE A STAND

STAND FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

VOTE 2022
LOCAL ELECTIONS
voteashburton.nz

Thinking about standing in the upcoming local government elections?

This session will provide you with the information you’ll need to know and answer your questions about standing for election.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION EVENING
Tuesday, 19 July at 5.30pm | Council Chambers, 137 Havelock Street, Ashburton

COUNCIL OFFICE 5 Baring Square West Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri 8.30am - 5pm Thursday 9am - 5pm	ASHBURTON PUBLIC LIBRARY 180 Havelock Street, Ashburton 7700 Mon - Fri 9.00am - 8.00pm Sat 10am - 1pm Sun 1pm - 4pm	EA NETWORKS CENTRE 20 River Terrace Mon - Fri 6am-9pm (pools 7pm, gym 8pm) Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 5pm, gym 6pm)	ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & ASHBURTON MUSEUM 327 West Street 10am - 4pm daily
---	---	---	--