

Christmas is almost upon us

Brush off your Bublé, the Christmas season is almost here with Light Up the Night returning on Saturday 29 November.

Mayor Liz McMillan said the event drew a huge crowd last year and she's excited to celebrate with the community once again in Baring Square East.

"It's always fantastic to see so many happy faces, enjoying the entertainment and staying for the countdown to the lighting of the tree."

While Santa is always a hit, the real star of the show is the town's six-metre Christmas tree, glittering with around 1,200 gold and silver baubles. Assembling the tree is a big job for the EA Networks elves, requiring a full day on the cherry picker.

"This tree has served us well for many years now, and it'll be looking better than ever this Christmas," says Mayor Liz. "We've refreshed some of the older baubles and branches, so it will really shine."

This year's Light Up the Night promises to be fun for the whole family. Santa and his elves will be mingling with the crowd for photos, and there'll be free face-painting for the kids. Visitors are encouraged to dress festively and capture the magic with free snaps at the iHeart Radio photo booth.



Join us at Light up the Night on Saturday 29 November, to kick off the festive season.

Onstage, a lineup of local talent will offer an evening full of music, dance and laughs. There will be plenty of tasty food on offer as well, with a food court and Café 199 in the library staying open late.

Mayor Liz says that the evening will culminate with the lighting of the tree at around 9.15pm.

"Hokonui will once again be running a

competition to find someone to join me on stage to push the button which will light up the tree.

"This is a wonderful chance to celebrate Christmas as a community, so bring your picnic blanket and make an evening of it."

The event is proudly supported by the Ashburton Courier and Hokonui. Find out more at lightupthenight.co.nz

Bridge trial pile planned for next week

Contractors are getting ready to install a trial pile on Chalmers Avenue, near the Ashburton River, as part of early works for the second Ashburton Bridge.

A 100-tonne crane has arrived on site and will be driving a large steel pipe into the ground - this work is now programmed to happen from Monday 10 November.

Over the past week, crews have set up the

site and removed several trees; the wood has been donated to the Ashburton Scout group.

Design work is also progressing and teams will be involved in doing more ground sampling near the river and checking which trees may need to be removed.

Surveying and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) mapping will also be happening,

to help confirm key aspects of the project. This work sometimes involves using drones.

The second Ashburton Bridge is a joint project by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and Ashburton District Council. Keep up to date with construction progress by signing up for email updates at nzta.govt.nz/2AB

Deputy Mayor Richard Wilson Now the hard work begins

Democracy has spoken.

Now it is time for your council to make decisions for the betterment of all the residents of the Ashburton district. All the campaign promises made now hit the reality of different opinions, budget constraints, and regulations.

We need to keep maintaining our roading network, make sure our drinking water, wastewater and storm water are governed competently within the standalone business unit you, as ratepayers, wanted.

All our district domains and gardens must be looked after, and other public buildings and facilities must be maintained properly.

On top of this we are building a new road to connect the long-awaited new bridge.

In the next few months, we as councillors will have to balance these competing wants with the finite rate income we collect. It will not be easy.

On a positive note, the Ashburton A&P show was great. As an attendee for over 50 years, I always enjoy meeting friends and viewing all traditional farming competitions, shearing, dog trialling, show jumping, dressage, stock competitions, and a few new ones. I am not sure there will be any chilli on the menus for several of the chilli-eating competitors for a while.

It was great to smell and taste the flavours from the traditional umu or food oven.

The show is a barometer of the health of our district. Strong businesses lead to good employment and a healthy vibrant community.

My weekend was capped off with the entertaining Rockzilla show put on by Variety Theatre Ashburton at the Ashburton Events Centre. So much talent on display.

What a great district we live in.



SHORT AND SWEET

BOYA ENTRIES

The entry period for the ANZ Business of the Year Awards has been extended to **Friday 14 November**. Organisers have added the extra time to accommodate those entries still in the pipeline, and to encourage a couple more in the export category. There are 14 categories, with the most popular so far the retail and hospitality, and emerging business categories. Category winners and a supreme winner will be announced at a gala dinner on 20 February 2026 at the Ashburton Aviation Museum's huge superhangar.

DIGI COACHES BACK

Need help with your phone, tablet, laptop, or other digital devices? Our friendly Digi Coaches at the library are here to assist! Whether it's setting up an app, troubleshooting a tech issue, or learning something new, come in and sit down with them. Available Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, 1pm-3pm at the library. Outside of these times you are welcome to drop in with your device and library staff will do what they can to assist you.

GARDENING HOUR

Connecting Mid Canterbury and the Ashburton Library are hosting another gardening conversation hour in the Ashburton Lakes Room at the library on **Wednesday 19 November**, at 1.30pm. These chats are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Come along and share tips, ask questions and talk plants and produce. Suitable for novice gardeners and experts!

GULL CONTROL

Environment Canterbury will be undertaking a control operation on black-backed gulls in the lower Ashburton River in late November. The gulls cause nuisance in large numbers, particularly for other protected bird species attempting to nest and breed. They are controlled using a targeted method of feeding bread laced with Alphachloralose poison. The control area is in the riverbed, from Croys Road downstream to just west of the Hakatere Huts.

Parking trial to test plate tech

Council will begin trialling an Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system next week to find out if the technology could be used for parking compliance in Ashburton.

The first phase of the trial will begin on 10 November and continue until Christmas. People can expect to see a Council-marked vehicle fitted with a camera patrolling on Burnett, Cass, Tancred and East Streets.

Group Manager of Compliance and Development Ian Hyde said that the first phase of the trial was about comparing data collected by the ANPR system and Council's traffic wardens.

"Our traffic wardens will still be issuing tickets for over-staying in parks during the first phase but a live trial with tickets generated by the new technology is planned for next year."

Mr Hyde said the vehicle would be driven around the block up to several times a



day, with each trip replicated by a traffic warden on foot.

"We'll be comparing the data from the camera and the wardens, as each parking space has to be defined by its time limit, or if it is a mobility park.

"In the second part of the trial next year, we'll look at how the system generates tickets and how they are sent to vehicle owners, because currently most people

get an infringement notice on their windscreen.

"We understand that some people might also have concerns about privacy, and we want to reassure the community that the cameras automatically blur faces. The system is designed to focus on a vehicle's number plate, make, model and colour."

Information collected, along with the vehicle's GPS location, will be securely recorded and stored in a cloud-based system that integrates with Council's existing parking data.

Access to this data will be restricted to authorised Council staff and used solely for the purposes of the trial.

The wider trial will also look at identifying vehicles with expired Warrants of Fitness or registrations, in line with Council's existing enforcement responsibilities.

Following the full trial, a report on how and whether to proceed with implementing the technology will be presented to elected members for consideration.

ROADING NOTICES

Trevors Road – Closed between Ealing Montalto Road and Withells Road from 15 October to 14 November while HEB carries out road maintenance on behalf of Council. Access for resident remains.

Burnett Street - Closed between Winter Street and Grigg Street 10-12 November while Greg Donaldson Contracting installs water and wastewater pipes as part of a new resident development.

Chalmers Avenue - closed in places between Dobson Street and Robilliard Park until 28 November while new water pipes are installed.

Pole Road - Closed between SH77 and Springfield Road East, until Monday 10 November for road maintenance.

Lilley Place and Macphail Place - Closed from Monday 27 October to Friday 14 November while new water pipes are installed.

Thompsons Track – Closed between Winchmore Lauriston Road and Pole Road, and Braemar Lauriston Road at Thompsons Track intersection from 3 November to 19 December, so Fulton Hogan can do heavy road maintenance on behalf of Council. Detours in place. Resident access remains.

Saunders Road – Closed between Pages Road and Galbraith Street from 10 November to 24 November while new wastewater pipes are installed by Tru-Line Civil on behalf of council. Resident access remains. Stage 2 of this work involves the closure of Saunders Road from Creek Road to Galbraith Street intersection, from 25 November to 12 December.

Full details of local road closures are on our website, ashburtondc.govt.nz

Methven board's first meeting

The new Methven Community Board met for the first time this week, and talked about pedestrian crossings and livestreaming future meetings.

The board elected Megan Fitzgerald as its chair, and Richie Owen as deputy chair. Both have previously served on the community board.

Board members talked about a request from the new retirement home Methven Central for a safe crossing point for pedestrians on Methven Chertsey Road, and a meeting with Council's roading staff is planned.

Members also considered a report to have their meetings recorded and audio available to the public. They asked for the cost of livestreaming meetings to be investigated and will consider the report again at a future meeting.

Board chair Megan thanked outgoing members Kelvin Holmes and Alan Lock, and said the new board was looking forward to carrying on the work that had been set in motion and excited to add its own projects.

Palm tree switched out



One of the eight ornamental windmill palms in Baring Square East was replaced this week, with arborists not needing to look too far for a new tree.

The palm that was removed had failed to thrive since it was relocated during the renovation of the square in 2023. Trachycarpus Fortunei (also known as the Chinese windmill palm) have been feature of Baring Square East for the past 100 years.

Community and Open Spaces Group Manager Toni Durham said staff had been

on the lookout for a replacement palm, and a local arborist had sourced one from a residential garden in Ashburton.

"We were able to take out the dead palm and relocate the new one, which had been destined for removal, all in one operation.

"The cost falls to the contractor who renovated the plantings in 2023 as the palm has a five-year maintenance period."

There are two windmill palms in each of the square's four quadrants, and the square is home to a selection of native grasses and shrubs, and trees like Cherry blossoms and London plane trees.

TRIENNIAL MEETINGS FOR RESERVE & HALL BOARDS

The new term of Council also signals a new three-year term for the volunteers who sit on the district's hall boards, reserve boards and domain boards.

Over the next couple of months, boards will be advertising their triennial meetings and looking for new members.

- 11 November - **Mt Somers Reserve Board** - 7pm, Mt Somers Memorial Hall supper room
- 11 November - **Lagmhor Westerfield Memorial Hall** - 7pm, at the hall
- 18 November - **Pendarves Reserve Board** - 7.30pm, Pendarves Fire Station
- 20 November - **Hinds Reserve Board** - 7.30, Hinds Fire Station meeting room
- 24 November - **Tinwald Reserve Board** - 7pm, Tinwald Memorial Hall meeting room
- 27 November - **Mayfield Reserve Board** - 7pm, Mayfield Memorial Hall supper room
- 1 December - **Rakaia Reserve Board** - 7pm, at the Rakaia Recreation Centre
- 2 December - **Methven Reserve Board** - 7.30pm, Methven United clubrooms



Water your lawn in the early hours of the morning or late evening to reduce water loss via evaporation

VISITING OUR DISTRICT?

Here's how we roll when it comes to recycling:

- Clean glass bottles in the green crate
- Clean hard plastics 1, 2 and 5 (no lids), and clean cardboard, paper and tins in the yellow bin
- Food waste and all other rubbish in the red bin



COUNCIL OFFICE

2 Baring Square East
Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri 8.30am-5pm
Thursday 9am-5pm

ASHBURTON LIBRARY

2 Baring Square East, Ashburton 7700
Mon & Fri 8.30am-6pm, Tue-Thu 8.30am-8pm
Sat & Sun 10am-4pm

EA NETWORKS CENTRE

20 River Terrace
Mon - Fri 5.45am-9pm (pools 8pm Mon & Tue, 7pm Wed-Fri; gym 8pm). Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 6pm, gym 6pm)

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

327 West Street
10am-4pm daily (late night Wed)