

Seasonal lake work underway

A 75-page report was presented to Councillors this week, providing an information update on water quality issues at Lake Hood and the work currently underway to address them.

Chief Executive Hamish Riach said a lot of work had been done to understand the complex nature of the lake since the first algal bloom in 2023.

“From the background work we’ve done, we have not yet come across any examples of cyanobacteria having been successfully eliminated from a lake the size of Lake Hood, so at this stage we are working towards mitigating the blooms.”

Council is working with key partners to ensure the approach is scientific and feasible.

“We’re working with Lincoln University and NIWA to start PhD research and trials in the lake canals later this year.”

This work is being led by Professor Susie Wood, an internationally recognised scientific expert on cyanobacteria.

Council is also considering future options for increasing water flows into the lake, including the feasibility of applying for a short-term, non-consumptive take.

The report highlights three main themes to help tackle water quality issues: identifying options for mitigating cyanobacteria blooms using a scientific approach, improving the intake and outlet infrastructure, and consenting options to



Water levels are low in Lake Hood at the moment to allow for seasonal flushing and maintenance on boat ramps and banks.

increase water flow.

The report also covers potential funding options for major works at Lake Hood in the future.

Mr Riach said the water level in the lake had been lowered recently to allow for winter flushing and maintenance work.

“Flushing simply means letting old water out and new water in, and maintenance can be carried out on boat ramps and banks while the lake is low.”

While the water body is closed to the public due to the public health warning, other areas of the park remain open. People can still ride their bikes around the lake, walk, play golf and visit the restaurant.

The full lake report can be found on the Council meetings page, as part of the agenda for the 21 May Council meeting.

A recording of the meeting and lake discussion is also available on Council's Facebook and YouTube channels.

Mayor Neil Brown Fasten your seatbelt, stow your tray table ... and Glow

If you’re flying with Air New Zealand this month, make sure you read the Kia Ora magazine tucked into the seat pocket in front of you – you’ll find Ashburton’s big Glow in the Park event on one of the pages.

It’s great to see Glow getting a mention outside our district, as it is a major event that last year brought 40,000 visitors to our town, and it’s free.

We know that about half of our Glow visitors came from outside the district, mostly from Selwyn, Christchurch or Timaru, and it’s a light show that changes each year so there’s always something new to see and experience.

This year is no different and the Ashburton Domain will be the place to be over King’s Birthday weekend. It couldn’t happen without our sponsors,

including EA Networks, and a lot of hard work by Council’s event team, so thank you to all for putting us on the map.

Our new library and civic building, Te Whare Whakatore, was also in the news this month after being awarded a public architecture award at the 2025 Canterbury Architecture Awards.

The citation described the building as a benchmark for contemporary civic architecture, uniting cultural expression, functional excellence and sustainability. That is architect speak for a building that represents our past and provides great, flexible spaces for our current and future work with the community.

I’m pleased that Athfield Architects has been acknowledged for their skill and effort in creating something physical from all the things the community told them were important to our district.



The library has become a meeting place for all manner of community groups and it’s great to see so many people, of all ages, coming together in this space.

It is also used by many agencies, who book space to have conversations with the community – the Electoral Commission is coming next Thursday on 29 May to talk about the importance of enrolling or updating your details so you can vote in the Local Elections later this year. The elections are held by postal vote in October, but nominations don’t open until July.

A new crop of Ashburton councillors will be elected then and be responsible for decisions about the district’s roads, three waters operations and community services.

SHORT AND SWEET

PLANTING DAY

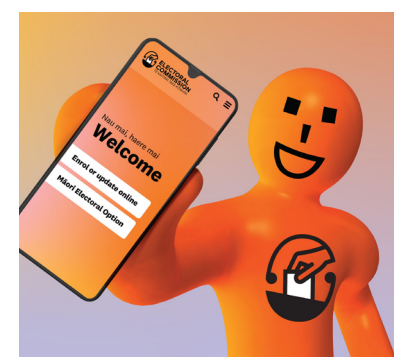
Planting volunteers are needed for a special World Biodiversity Day event at the Harris Scientific Reserve on **Sunday 25 May**. Interested? Join the crew on Sunday at 9am. The Harris reserve is at 409 Lovetts Road (off Maronan Road). Biodiversity volunteers make a positive impact on the environment and the group welcomes new planters, for this and other planting events.

ALERT TEST

Don't panic if your cellphone buzzes loudly on Sunday - it's the annual test of the Emergency Mobile Alert system, and it will take place between 6pm and 7pm on **25 May**. The alert will be broadcast to all capable phones and allows the National Emergency Management Agency to evaluate the system, cell towers, and the ability for mobile phones to receive the alert.

ENROL, BE HEARD

Council and the Electoral Commission will hold a community open day on **29 May** to encourage people to make sure their enrolment details, including their postal address, are up to date, so they can vote in the local elections later this year. The open day will be held in the Ashburton Lakes Room at the Ashburton Library and the Electoral Commission Team will be available between 9.30am and 2.30pm and from 6.30pm to 7.30pm.



WASTE GRANT

Do you have a project aimed at lowering waste? Fund it with a Canterbury Waste Minimisation Grant! The grants are open to groups and residents in the Ashburton District and you can find out more at ccc.govt.nz/waste-minimisation-in-canterbury-grant

Choose your sensory level at Glow

Following a successful trial last year, low sensory sessions are returning to EA Networks Glow in the Park this King’s Birthday weekend.

Between 3pm and 5pm each day, noise levels will be lowered, and music will be switched off.

Sensory sensitivities can affect people on various levels, and event organisers are keen to provide opportunities for those who might otherwise find the event inaccessible due to the level of noise and the large number of people.

Visitors to the low-sensory sessions will still get to enjoy most of Glow, with the light displays, food court and the quieter amusement rides, including the Super Trooper, merry go round and bouncy castles all operating.

The full line-up of attractions will start up from 5pm, when the crowds are expected to start arriving.

For those who are looking for the full after-dark experience and are okay with a more excited atmosphere, then Sunday night is typically the quietest of the three nights.

The low-sensory sessions are also open to people with accessibility requirements,



The carousel will be operating during the low sensory sessions.

such as groups from local rest homes, but event organisers encourage others to wait until general admittance at 5pm.

The event remains free to enter thanks to our event sponsors, including EA

Networks, Event Hire, The Hits, NZHerald.co.nz and the Ashburton Courier.

EA Networks Glow in the Park runs from 3pm-9.30pm, 30 May, 31 May and 1 June. Visit glowinthepark.nz for more info.

Do you qualify for a rates rebate?

Low-income households who have not applied for a rates rebate for the 2024-25 financial year should do so before the end of June – they may qualify for a rebate of up to \$790.

Households must apply for the rebate annually, and new application forms for the 2025-26 year will be sent out in August.

Group Manager of Business Support Helen Barnes said the last rates instalment for the current financial year had been sent out and was due for payment on 20 May.

“It’s a good time to remind people about the rebate and encourage them to apply, if they meet the income threshold.

"Many low-income households will have already received a rebate for this financial year, but there’ll be some who don’t



realise they qualify.”
The Rates Rebate Scheme is run by Government and applications are processed by Ashburton District Council staff.
Ms Barnes said residents who wanted to

know more about the rebate scheme and qualifying criteria could contact Council’s Customer Services team on 03-307-7700.

“Anyone who is having difficulty paying their rates should talk to us before it becomes a problem.

"Staff are more than happy to help ratepayers make a payment plan and while many people spread their annual rates across four instalments, direct debits can be made weekly, fortnightly or monthly to suit their circumstances.”

Information and application forms are available on Council’s website ashburtondc.govt.nz/rates

You can also check if you qualify using the Government’s rebate calculator, which is available on the rates page.

Spotlights for three trees

Two cedar trees and an oak planted in a community space outside the Blue Pub in Methven will soon be bathed in a special glow.

Ground lights that will highlight the trees’ beauty will be installed in the next few weeks, in time for winter visitors to enjoy.

Council Infrastructure and Open Spaces Group Manager Neil McCann said the three trees were in an area well used, in summer and winter.

“We’ve been talking with the Methven lighting group about some kind of permanent feature lighting and this is the result. EA Networks will soon be upgrading

the power supply to the area and then installing the special ground lights.”

Mr McCann said the new electricity cables could be installed without digging up pavers and paths, and by hydrovac trenching the lawn.

“Reinstating the power supply has been necessary and the ground lights will connect to that. We think the whole area will be lifted by the ground lights, and just in time for the winter tourist season.”

The oak tree, Quercus robur or common oak, was planted on 19 July 1919 during celebrations after World War One. It also marks the site of one of Methven’s original shops.

ROAD CLOSURE

Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1974 - Schedule 10 (11e), Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a temporary road closure to enable the holding of a community event - **Fire & Emergency’s anniversary celebration event.**

- Road to be closed:
- **McKerrow Street, Methven (between Main Street SH77 and Blackford Street)**

Period of closure: **From 8am until 3pm on Saturday, 31 May 2025.**

NEIL McCANN, Group Manager Infrastructure & Open Spaces

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at Hine Paaka (Council Chamber), 2 Baring Square East, unless specified.

- Monday 26 May, **Methven Community Board**, 9am, Mt Hutt Memorial Hall
- Tuesday 27 May, **Water Zone Committee** (live-streamed), 1pm
- Wednesday 28 May, **Council Activity Briefings** (live-streamed), 9.30am
- Tuesday 3 June, **Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee**, 9.30am, Wakanui Room
- Wednesday 4 June, **Council Meeting** (live-streamed), 1pm
- Wednesday 18 June, **Council Meeting** (live-streamed), 1pm
- Tuesday 24 June, **Stockwater Transition Working Group**, 1.30pm
- Wednesday 25 June, **Three Waters Committee** (live-streamed), 9.30am
- Wednesday 25 June, **Audit & Risk Committee** (live-streamed), 1pm
- Thursday 26 June, **Council Hearings Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy** (live-streamed), 9am

WORKS NOTICES

- King and Alexander Streets, Chertsey** - Closed until 13 September while a new water treatment plant is built. The road closure will not impact Chertsey School access.
- Trevors Road** - One way (northbound traffic only) between Beach Road and Wellington Street from 7 April to 27 June for work related to lifestyle village development.
- Blands Road** - Closed on 17 May from 9am until 4.30pm for the Ashburton Car Club’s standing quarter mile sprint. Detours available.
- SH1 to Moore Street** - NZTA is undertaking a major asphaltting job on this section of road, detours and traffic management will be in place until 15 May. Delays expected.
- Full details of local road closures are on our website, ashburtondc.govt.nz*

STOCKWATER DROP-INS

- Interested in the future of the Bushside intake and the Stoney Creek intake?
- As part of its work to exit the stockwater delivery service, Council is holding separate public drop-in sessions for these two stockwater intakes.
- Bushside Intake**
- Staveley Hall on Wednesday 28 May at 4pm
- Stoney Creek Intake**
- Mt Somers Hall, Tuesday 17 June at 4pm
- All welcome.

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)