

Who's looking for your vote?

Voting in the local elections is now just three weeks away and voters can find profiles and videos of those standing in the Ashburton District online at voteashburton.nz.

Meet-the-candidate events are another way to learn more about the people who will have a big impact on our lives over the next three years, and following one meeting in Methven last night, there's one organised in the Ashburton College auditorium on 27 August, at 7pm.

Chief Executive Hamish Riach said the Ashburton event would feature the four candidates standing for mayor, and the nine standing for the Ashburton ward.

"The event will be livestreamed, which means you can watch it on the night, or later on our Facebook and YouTube channels. These events are a really great way for people to get an idea of who the candidates are and what they stand for."

There will be time after the meeting to meet the candidates in person, and chat over a hot drink.

Council's dedicated webpage for the local elections, voteashburton.nz, also has candidate statements and videos where people can learn more about the people and the process of electing a new council and mayor. In the videos, candidates have 90 seconds to answer three questions.



Voting packs will start arriving in mailboxes from Tuesday 9 September and voting closes - noon, Saturday 11 October.

Mr Riach said voting turnout across the country had been trending down over the past decade.

"We want people to engage with local democracy and so we're doing our best to

When voting opens on 9 September, orange voting bins will be at:

- Te Whare Whakaree/ Ashburton District Council (two bins - customer services and library)
- EA Networks Centre - 20 River Terrace, Ashburton
- Fresh Choice Tinwald - 124 McMurdo Street, Tinwald
- Methven Four Square - 33/37 McMillan Street, Methven
- Rakaia Mobil - 50 Bridge Street, Rakaia

give voters easy ways to find about more about the candidates and take part in the local elections."

Completed voting papers can be mailed back in the postage-paid return envelope provided with voting documents or dropped into any of the six orange ballot bins that will be located around the district.

Rates rebate clinics for Methven, Rakaia

Council's Customer Service team is heading to Methven and Rakaia in September and October to help residents with their rates rebate applications.

The rebate clinics will be at the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall on 10 September, from 10am-12pm, and at the Rakaia Library on 1 October, from 10am-1pm.

Group Manager of Business Support Helen Barnes said residents who received rebates last year would have received a

letter from Council in the post, along with a new application form for the 2025-26 rating year.

"People can fill in the form and bring their supporting documents along to an appointment at one of our sessions at Methven or Rakaia, or they can make an appointment at Council's office in Ashburton. There have been changes to the rebate scheme this year and many more households will be eligible for some, if not all of the maximum rebate of \$805."

Residents wanting to make appointments at the Methven or Rakaia sessions, or in Ashburton, should ring Council's offices on 307 7700.

The Government has made changes to the Rates Rebate Scheme this year and the threshold to be eligible for the maximum rebate for SuperGold Cardholders and their households was lifted from \$31,510 to \$45,000 - about the rate for a couple receiving superannuation.

MAYOR Neil Brown

Early moves on second bridge

If you tuned in to this week's council meeting, you would have heard an update from the NZTA team in charge of building our second urban bridge and connecting road.

This is one project that I am pleased to see gathering pace and there's a lot of preliminary work going on - from sampling the river bed to encouraging the threatened black-billed gulls to nest well away from the construction zone.

We expect to hear soon who might be in the running to design and build the

second bridge and connecting road, remembering Government is paying for the bridge and approaches, and Council is paying for the street that will link to Grahams Road.

I urge anyone who is interested in the bridge project to sign up for email updates from NZTA, via their website, or come along to an information session at Te Whare Whakaree on Thursday 11 September. From 3.30pm to 6.30pm, you'll be able to talk to the project team, ask questions and see maps of planned work.

Also on the agenda for this week's

meeting was the Water Services Delivery Plan - this is the plan Council needed to make as part of the Government's Local Water Done Well reforms.

The reforms are all about ensuring Councils spend the money needed to make their drinking water and wastewater systems compliant with national rules.

It's a good thing that this Council, and those of the past, made sensible decisions about upgrades and renewals ... but there's still work to do.



SHORT AND SWEET

KURA POUNAMU

The Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum is currently hosting a special exhibition of greenstone treasure. Developed by Te Papa and Ngai Tahu, the touring exhibition features more than 200 taonga pounamu and tells the story of this most precious of stones, its significance for Māori, and its enduring value from ancient times until today.

NEED A JP?

Justices of the Peace are available at the Ashburton Library every Tuesday and Friday, from 12pm until 2pm. A JP is a volunteer who witnesses and certifies legal documents, such as statutory declarations, affidavits, and copies of original documents. No appointment needed.

MONEY FOR ART

Whether you're producing a play or hosting an exhibition, your arts project could be eligible for funding from Creative Communities NZ. Applications are open during August so go to ashburtondc.govt.nz/grants and find out more.

STAYING SAFE

Council, Age Concern and NZ Transport Agency are teaming up to run another refresher course for older drivers. The Staying Safe course will be on **Friday 5 September**, at the Senior Centre on Cameron Street, from 10am-2pm - phone 308-6817 to register, or email ageconcernashburton@xtra.co.nz. This is a free classroom course to re-familiarise yourself with traffic rules and safe driving practices.

BROTHERS INTAKE

Community members interested in the future of the Brothers stockwater intake are invited to a meeting at the Mayfield Hall on 2 September, 4pm, and encouraged to have their say via an online survey (ashburtondc.govt.nz/services/projects/ashburton-district-stockwater-network). The Alford Forest intake public survey is also still open for feedback, until Monday 1 September.

Boughs of friendship renewed

Ashburton College and EA Networks Centre reinforced their special relationship this week with the unveiling of a new plaque at the base of a commemorative tree.

The scarlet oak planted at the edge of the carpark replaces a tree donated by the college when the recreation centre was built 10 years ago.

Ashburton Mayor Neil Brown said the original tree had to be removed when the centre’s road entrance was reconfigured last summer.

“There’s been so much growth in the number of people using the centre that more traffic lanes were needed but we’ve planted another tree in a more prominent spot to celebrate our relationship with Ashburton College.

“College students are big users of the facility, as part of school competitions or in their leisure time, and quite a few students also have part-time lifeguard roles. Some even go on to full-time jobs in the sport and recreation industry when they leave school.

“I also want to acknowledge the school’s ongoing support as well as the effort students put in 13 years ago to raise \$10,000 for EA Networks Centre when construction was just beginning.”

The original tree was planted on Sunday



15 March 2015, as part of the college’s 50th jubilee celebrations.

The new scarlet oak, or Quercus coccinea, is a deciduous tree with dark red bark and dark green foliage, turning a brilliant scarlet in autumn.

Mayor Brown was joined at the unveiling ceremony this week by Ashburton College principal Simon Coleman, head prefect Yasmin Larry and head of the student environment committee Lily Zhen.

Lily said the school was pleased to have both the tree and plaque established

now for many years to come as a visible acknowledgement of the school’s support.

As part of community fundraising for the centre, the college repurposed its annual work day into a work weekend on 11-13 May 2012. Students undertook paid jobs in the community and collectively raised just under \$10,000.

EA Networks Centre was opened on 9 May 2015 and this year celebrated its 10-year anniversary by releasing concept plans for an outdoor mini golf course, which will be ready for play this summer.

PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a proposal to temporarily close roads to traffic to enable the holding of the following community event.

RIDE THE RAKAIA

Road proposed to be closed:

- **Rakaia Barrhill Methven Road, from Baker Road to West Town Belt**

Period of closure: **From 6am to 3pm on Saturday, 25 October 2025**

Any person objecting to the proposal should do so in writing by post or email to the Council, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton by 4pm, **Monday, 1 September 2025.**

NEIL McCANN, Group Manager Infrastructure & Open Spaces

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at Hine Paaka (Council Chamber), 2 Baring Square East, unless specified. Agendas can be found on our website.

Wednesday 27 August, **Treasury Policy Workshop**, 1.30pm

Wednesday 3 September, **Council meeting**, 1pm (livestreamed)

Tuesday 9 September, **Ashburton District Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee**, Wakanui Room, 9.30am

Wednesday 10 September, **Three Waters Committee**, 9.30am (livestreamed)

Wednesday 10 September, **Audit and Risk Committee**, 1pm (livestreamed)

ROADING NOTICES

Line Road, Methven - Parts of Line Road will be closed to traffic until mid-October while new wastewater pipes are installed. Tru-Line Civil is laying about 800 metres of pipe from Methven’s wastewater treatment plant west along Line Road to the township, and initially Line Road will be closed between Dolma Street and Methven Chertsey Road. Detours in place.

King and Alexander Streets, Chertsey - Closed until 13 September while a new water treatment plant is built. The road closure does not impact school access.

Philip Street - Sections closed at times between Oak Grove and Walker Street until the end of August while new water pipes are installed by Rooney Earthmoving. Resident access remains.

Mason Place - Intersection of Mason Place and Churchill Avenue will be closed to traffic on 25-27 August. Mason Place will be closed until 31 October, while new water pipes are installed. Access for residents remains.

Tancred Street - Closed between William Street and Chalmers Avenue until 29 August while new water pipes are installed by Rooney Earthmoving. Resident access remains.

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

Newcomers share stories over noodles

Seven newcomers to Ashburton will be sharing their life stories with the community during Welcoming Week and in the lead-up to the Hakatere Noodle Festival on Saturday 13 September.

The noodle festival is a celebration of noodle dishes, when our diverse community gathers at Baring Square East for food, friendship and fun.

Group Manager of Democracy and Engagement Toni Durham said 20 food vendors would be onsite, including



commercial food truck operators and community groups selling their own cultural cuisine.

“Most will have a special noodle dish for the event, and there’ll be dessert options too.”

As part of Welcoming Week, seven new residents will be sharing how they came to live in the Ashburton District, and their stories and photographs will be on display in Baring Square East in the week before the festival.

Mrs Durham encouraged people to read the newcomers’ stories.

“Their journeys to Ashburton and reasons

for moving are all different, but they are united in finding a community that has welcomed them.

“On festival night there’ll also be an interactive whanau (family) zone that will have a range of games, including games from the different cultures to try out.”

Staff from the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum will also bring a special canvas.

Mrs Durham said the canvas would have the outlines of faces pre-drawn and visitors would be invited to paint their likeness on it. “This will be a permanent record of the faces of Ashburton and on display later in the Ashburton Library.”

WATER WORKS

Reduced flows

Council is alerting properties on its stockwater service that reduced flows are likely next month, when the Rangitata Diversion Race will close on 1 September for a three-week maintenance period.

Mason Place

Residents in and around Mason Place have been advised that contractors will be replacing watermain in their street from Monday 25 August. The work is expected to take five weeks and while there’ll be some disturbance, resident access remains.

Meet Your Local Candidates!

It’s nearly time to elect a new Mayor and Council — but how well do you know the people asking for your vote? Come along to our Q&A session, and hear directly from the candidates.

ASHBURTON

Wed 27 August, 7pm

Ashburton College Auditorium

VOTE 2025
LOCAL ELECTIONS

voteashburton.nz

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)