

Water plant upgrades wrap up

The upgraded drinking water treatment plant at Dromore will be commissioned this week, one of the final jobs in a \$10 million package of work to add UV steps to council water supplies.

UV disinfection is required by new national drinking water rules, and council has also added UV at treatment plants on the Ashburton, Rakaia, Mayfield and Hinds supplies.

Group Manager of Infrastructure Neil McCann said the Dromore upgrade also included cartridge filtration and a new 5.1km distribution pipeline to the 38 rural households connected to the supply.

“The new filtration and UV equipment will be commissioned this week and that should be seamless, though some residents may notice a momentary drop in water pressure during the switching over process at the end of the week.

“It’s exciting to see this major project wrapping up and it means that Council drinking water supplies are moving toward full compliance with new regulatory standards and performance measures set by the government.”

Council has over 520km of reticulated drinking water infrastructure servicing about 70 per cent of residents around the district, and plans to grow the network to cope with population growth in the future.

Mr McCann said council’s Water Services



Delivery Plan set out levels of service and projects for the future.

“One of those projects under way at the moment is the installation of water meters in eastern Rakaia. Information from those meters about household water consumption will help Council identify unusual water use, which could be from leaking pipes.

“Managing and maintaining our infrastructure, and operating within our consented water take is crucial.”

Council’s Water Services Delivery Plan:

Government requires councils to have a Water Services Delivery Plan, approved by the Department of Internal Affairs.

The plan sets out how council delivers drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services, and an internal business unit (IBU) is being created within Council to manage those three waters services.

Councillors have oversight of water services through a Three Waters Committee that meets every four weeks.

Cameras look inside sewer pipes

A team of wastewater detectives is back in Ashburton next week, to continue checking the internal conditions of Council’s sewerage pipe network.

The crew from Citycare Water uses a special mobile camera to assess the internal condition and structures of sewer pipes. The images from a rover camera connected to a fibre optic cable are then checked, with operators looking for irregularities like cracks, water infiltration, breakages, tree roots and collapsed areas.

The CCTV surveillance is less invasive than digging up a pipe to inspect it, and information gained from the footage helps Council plan its pipe renewal programme.

The wastewater detectives will be at McElrea Place and Nixon Street on Monday, then move to Burnett Street, Hanrahan Street and Davis Crescent by Thursday. On Friday, the crew will be on Oak Grove.

The schedule may change and households will be advised by letter before the inspections begin.

CE Hamish Riach Tough talk as Annual Plan forms

The Annual Plan process to set a budget and work programme for 2026-27 moved to the next phase this week, with another workshop.

Councillors were last week given a global view of the budget being proposed for the next financial year, and had the opportunity on Tuesday to start asking about that expenditure in more detail. They didn’t hold back.

There’s a lot for Councillors to get their heads around during the making of a plan, including the different types of rates that are applied, the uniqueness of local government accounting, and how the contents of the Revenue and Financing Policy influence decisions.

They must also think about things like the cost of interest if Council needs to borrow money to undertake capital work, and the rules around spending from reserve funds built up in some activity areas. It’s fairly complex, and in the end a balancing act between what Council must do by law and what the



community needs or expects.

While we talk of an average rate rise, the reality is that rates depend on where you live and the services you receive.

At the next Annual Plan workshop, Council staff will model how the proposed increase will affect different properties and then Councillors see the impact their decisions have on that rates number.

There are several more workshops to come as we all work toward a final draft plan, some time mid-March.

Councillors will then decide how the plan will be shared with the community and ultimately, a final plan will be adopted by the end of June.

So, there was a lot of debate and while aspirations exceeded resources at times, the drive to run a large organisation like Council as efficiently as possible was very clear.

All these workshops are recorded and open to the public.

SHORT AND SWEET

DAHLIAS DAZZLE

The dahlias in the Ashburton Domain are putting on a delightful show. Staff have been fielding lots of compliments from visitors, who are impressed with the colour and size of the flowers. The dinner-plate dahlias are massive!



LIVE ON THE LAWN

Home-grown talent is the theme of Council’s music event, Live on the Lawn, at the Ashburton Domain on Saturday 28 March. Grab a picnic blanket and soak up the sounds of our own Molly Harrison, Tyrone Schwalger, The Mavericks, and Amelia and Cam Luxton. The event gets under way at 11am on the Long Lawn, near SH1. There’ll be food trucks and market stalls too!

CHANGE PROPOSED FOR CAMPGROUND

Council and the Mt Somers Reserve Board are proposing that the Mt Somers Domain campground becomes a self-contained campsite from March. The reserve board would continue operating the domain and campsite, though the powered sites, showers and kitchen will close if the change proposal goes ahead. Read more at ashburtondc.govt.nz.

INFO SESSION FOR STOCKWATER

Council will host a public information session on Tuesday 17 February for those who receive water from the **Cracroft and Klondyke stockwater intakes**. The event will start at 4.30pm and be held in the Ruapuna hall. The stockwater race network for those two intakes is between Ruapuna and Lowcliffe, and Council is exiting the stockwater delivery service. Property owners have been invited to take part in a survey about future water use and are welcome to come along to the session. An online survey for the public is open at itsourplace.nz.

New online tool helps grants

Council's annual grants round opens on 1 March, along with a new online tool to help community groups and others looking for funds for their projects.

There are nine different Council funds available, from biodiversity and mountainbike trail maintenance, to heritage and community events, as well as funds from the Creative Communities Scheme and Sport New Zealand Travel Fund.

Applications must be submitted by Tuesday 31 March.

Group Manager of Community and Open Spaces Toni Durham said Council was also launching ADC Funding Finder, an online directory of all grants and funding sources.

"Council has teamed up with GrantGuru to make this tool free and accessible for our community groups, not-for-profits, businesses and individuals and it lists all government and private sector grants that are available. It covers grants available regionally, nationally and outside of New Zealand, and it has some great tips on how to help make your application successful."

Users need to register to use GrantGuru and they can also sign up to receive alerts about funding programmes relevant to them as they became available.



The Ashburton Toy Library has been a past recipient of Council grants.

Mrs Durham said Government and private corporations offered grants to fulfil their strategic policies and aims.

"When your project aligns with these aims and goals then there is more chance of an application being successful. But it can be tricky describing your project and making a case for funding, and that is why the GrantGuru tips are so useful."

The Methven Community Board also offers grants year-round via its discretionary fund with recently introduced funding rounds.

More info about Council's grants can be found at ashburtondc.govt.nz/grants. From 1 March, Council's grants webpage will also include a link to the new ADC Funding Finder on GrantGuru.

Boosting business ideas



Inspiring stories from local business owners made an impact on participants in the King's Trust Aotearoa workshop for young entrepreneurs in Ashburton last week.

They heard from engineer and artist Fraser Bailey, merino clothing sales and marketing director Harriet Bell and contractor Andrew Quigley, about how they started out in business, and the ups and downs along the way.

The trust runs entrepreneurial workshops all around New Zealand and the Ashburton event was one of two in the South Island. It was aimed at young people interested in starting their own business, with tips about mentorship and networking.

Tash Pupuke and Victoria Pupuke were among the 10 participants at the two-day workshop and said they were leaving

feeling inspired.

They said the guest speakers' life stories and honesty about their journeys had resonated with them, and they had "walked the talk".

Tash said they were also departing with a lot of good information, about systems and process, and about the value of having a mentor.

The King's Trust workshop was hosted at the Ashburton District Council by the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs co-ordinator Sharon Watson.

Mayor Liz McMillan said the taskforce was a nationwide organisation backed by rural and provincial mayors, all committed to helping young people into jobs or training.

"Or in this case, having a good idea and starting their own business. Workshops like these help reinforce self-belief and provide lots of great information and inspiration."

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)

ROADING NOTICES

Thompsons Track – Closed between Winchmore Lauriston Road and Pole Road, and Braemar Lauriston Road at Thompsons Track intersection until 31 March, so Fulton Hogan can do heavy road maintenance on behalf of Council. Detours in place. Resident access remains.

Mayfield Valetta Road – Closed between Anama Valetta Road and Tinwald Westerfield Mayfield Road until 28 February, so Fulton Hogan can do heavy road maintenance on behalf of Council. Detours in place. Resident access remains.

Ealing Montalto Road – Closed between Shepherds Bush Road and Ruapuna School Road until 27 February while Grant Hood Contracting carries out road maintenance for Council. Detours in place.

Ealing Montalto Road – Closed between Baxters Road and Lakes Road until 6 March while Grant Hood Contracting carries out road maintenance for Council. Detours in place.

Fairfield Road – Closed between Company Road and Singletree Road until 31 March, while Fulton Hogan carries out heavy road maintenance for Council.

Elizabeth Avenue (Rakaia) – Closed from Burrowes Road to Tancred Street until 27 February, while Rooney Earthmoving installs water pipes for Council. Access for residents remains.

Spaxton Street – Closed in parts (including Lilley Place and Macphail Place) until 27 February while Rooney Earthmoving installs water mains for Council.

Albert Street – One-way closures are in place on Albert Street until 16 February, while ACL installs services for a private development. No entry from Albert Street to Trevors Road, no entry from Trevors Road to Albert Street.

SH1 at Longbeach Road intersection (NZTA) – Road reconstruction until 18 March. Expect speed restrictions and delays of up to 10 minutes. This reconstruction work is weather dependent and may be rescheduled at short notice.

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

TRIENNIAL MEETINGS FOR RESERVE & HALL BOARDS

- 24 February - **Ealing Reserve Board** - 7pm, Ealing hall.

GRAZING TENDER

This tender is for a three-year Licence to Occupy for 0.4043 hectares of land at 14 Meadowlands Green, Ashburton (Lot 8 DP 539231). **Permitted use is for sheep grazing only.**

The Licence to Occupy commences 1 April 2026, and tenders must be received by Ashburton District Council on or before 4pm, 20 March.

Please contact commercial@adc.govt.nz for a tender application form or for more information.

