

SAFE COMMUNITIES ASHBURTON DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT:

1 JULY, 2020 – 30 JUNE, 2021



***Our Vision:** Ashburton District, our place, a safe place to live, work and play, free from preventable injury and harm*

What is a “Safe Community”?

The Safe Community model creates an infrastructure in local communities to increase action on injury prevention and safety promotion through **local collaboration**. Working together provides the opportunity to take a district-wide, strategic overview of community safety issues in the District and enables greater reach and a collective “weight” to respond to them.

Background

Ashburton District is “safe” but it can be safer. Analysis of district data, research and community consultation tells us that falls in older people, leading to both fatal and non-fatal injury; road crashes; theft and burglary; family harm; and suicide are key safety concerns for Ashburton District. Key priority areas identified for Ashburton District are:

- Rural Safety/Isolation
- Falls in Older People
- Road Safety
- Alcohol, Drugs and Community Safety (early intervention/prevention)
- Harm Reduction/Prevention (family harm; suicide prevention)
- Social/community resiliency in times of emergency/crisis

Ashburton District gained accreditation as a Safe Community from the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand in May, 2019.

The Safe Communities Steering Group of 27 agencies is chaired by Deputy Mayor, Liz McMillan, and works to a Strategic Plan (2019-2024) and an annual Business Plan, to address the key priority areas identified for Ashburton District.

Working Groups are developed for projects, which agencies “self-select” to join if they have an interest. This also enables other agencies/interested parties which are not members of the Steering Group to join the Working Groups.

The Steering Group meets bi-monthly and receives reports from the Working Groups. A Safe Communities Co-ordinator is employed 20 hours per week to co-ordinate the Steering Group and to develop and co-ordinate projects.

The Steering Group recognises the work of other networks focussing on community safety (for example, the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee; the Mid Canterbury Suicide Prevention Network) and works collaboratively with them.

Key Achievements: 1 July, 2020 – 30 June, 2021

(Year 2 of the 5-Year Strategic Plan, 2019-2024)

- **Rural Safety/Isolation: Community Transport Service – the “Mid Canterbury Connector”**



This project aims to reduce rural and social isolation by looking at the need for a low cost community transport service, driven by volunteers, to bring people living in the more rural/remote areas of the District into Ashburton Township for medical appointments, doing business with Council, seeing friends and family, shopping etc.

During this period:

- The Mid Canterbury Community Vehicle Trust was established to manage the service
- Eight volunteer drivers were recruited and vetted
- A six-month trial of the service, covering two routes around the District on two days of the week, and using the Community House Mid Canterbury Community Van, commenced on 12 January, 2021, funded by the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS)
- Community uptake was less than expected and may have been impacted by the service operating only two fixed routes, two days a week, and not as an on-demand service
- Funding for the second six months of operation (July-December, 2021) was received from MSD and funding from Environment Canterbury included in the Long Term Plan, 2021-2031
- An online and paper survey was conducted (3-30 June) to ascertain community views on the future style of the service (fixed routes and days versus on demand, Monday to Friday) for consideration by the Trust in July

- **Community Information**



A collaboration between the Citizens Advice Bureau National Office and Community House Mid Canterbury, with support from Safe Communities Ashburton District. This project aimed to establish a CAB branch for the District, so that residents have access to quality, up to date information to help keep themselves and their families safe, be involved in the community via clubs and activities, etc.

During this period:

- Establishment funding and a grant was received from the Ashburton District Council
- A part-time Co-ordinator commenced work in July, 2020
- Nineteen volunteers were recruited and trained
- The Mid Canterbury CAB offices were established at the Community House and opened to the public on 2 December, 2020, under the management of the National Office of the CAB.
- The Ashburton District Community Directory (previously listed on the Community House Mid Canterbury website) was uploaded onto the CAB national database/website and updated. This was funded by a grant from the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS)
- In its first seven months of operation, and with limited promotion while resources were being developed and volunteers trained, the Mid Canterbury CAB received 327 enquiries
- The Mid Canterbury CAB regularly shares information with the Safe Communities Steering Group and the Caring for Communities Group on service needs/gaps ascertained from public enquiries (for example, a large number of ongoing enquiries about emergency/social housing)

- **Falls Prevention for Older People**

During this period:

- The Falls Prevention Network undertook a promotion in October, 2020, with a feature page in the Ashburton Courier newspaper on 1st October, focussing on the International Day of Older Adults and promoting the Live Stronger for Longer approved strength and balance classes in the District
- Four local class providers offered free classes for the month and over 20 people took advantage of the free offer to try a class over the month

- **Suicide Prevention**

During this period:

- A Mid Canterbury Suicide Prevention Network was established in July, 2020 and 19 agencies signed a Charter, committing them to work together to promote wellbeing and resiliency and, ultimately, to reduce the incidence of suicide in the District
- A Mid Canterbury Suicide Prevention/Postvention Strategy and Action Plan (2019-2024) was developed in partnership with the Safer Mid Canterbury Lives Worth Living (LWL) Programme and the Network, and includes the work of the LWL Programme and collaborative projects identified by the Network
- A list of all mental health services in Ashburton District and how to access them has been developed and shared with the CAB so that the public can access the information

- **Caring for Communities Social/Community Recovery Group** – In June, 2020 the Safe Communities programme assumed co-ordination of this project, which had been established as the Ashburton District Council's Welfare Response Group during the lockdown.

The focus of the Group is social and community recovery needs and capacities in COVID-19 times. The Group commissioned a large piece of **social research**, funded by Advance Ashburton, so as to be well informed about community needs in the short, medium and long term; the capacity of the not for profit/social sector to support the community; and to provide information to funders about local needs and gaps. Projects/actions undertaken from the research will enable the Ashburton community to become more resilient and better able to respond in times of emergency or crisis.

An Action Plan has been developed from the research recommendations and a key project has been the formation of a **Working Group on Social/Emergency Housing**, convened by the Deputy Mayor, in May, 2021. A number of issues and possible solutions are currently being researched.

Funding was applied for from Advance Ashburton to conduct a small piece of follow-up social research in July/August, 2021, to ascertain progress with achieving the Action Plan, how the not for profit sector is faring in the wake of possible pressures from Covid-19 (client numbers, funding, etc) and to look at the future of the Caring for Communities Group.

- **Safety Village, Ashburton A and P Show, 30th and 31st October, 2020** – planning was undertaken for this event, which was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Safety Promotion** - In 2020 the Ashburton Courier newspaper offered the Safe Communities programme a free, monthly column to promote safety messages. The column commenced in November, 2020 and spaces were offered to Safe Communities member agencies. This has been a great way for community agencies to promote their safety messages and services and for the Safe Communities programme to be profiled in the local media.
- **Results Based Accountability (RBA) Evaluation Training** was undertaken by eight Safe Communities Steering Group members in February, 2021 and will be utilised by the Safe Communities programme to ascertain the results and impacts of programmes – i.e. whether they make a real difference to people's wellbeing and safety.
- **Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand Governance Survey** – 14 members of the Safe Communities Steering Group completed this survey, conducted by the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand. The survey report provides a picture of how well the governance group is functioning, in particular how well the group is combining members' knowledge, skills and resources, so that the group can accomplish more together than on their own (collaboration). The Steering Group had a very strong performance, with 5/5 scores rated strong in terms of collaboration; leadership; members believing the group

has legitimacy and credibility; and satisfaction with the way the group is developing and implementing its plans.

- **Planning for new 2021-2022 Projects was undertaken:**
 - A new collaboration with Police and Neighbourhood Support on a public awareness campaign on **theft/burglary** from residential properties and vehicles and promotion of **tools engraving for tradespeople** to assist with identification if tools are stolen and recovered by the Police.
 - A new collaboration with ACC, the SEEDS family support/parenting programme (Safer Mid Canterbury) and Plunket to develop a **child injury awareness/education programme** comprising two projects – 1. utilising the Safekids Aotearoa Toolkit, which educates parents about the dangers of choking; brain injury through shaking, or not wearing cycle helmets or accidents; poisoning; and burns and - 2. working with ACC to develop a ski safety education programme for local schools ahead of the ski season.
 - A submission was made to the Council’s updated Walking and Cycling Strategy on the benefits of an **off road learn to cycle/road rules and road safety track for children** and information collected on existing tracks in Christchurch and Timaru.
 - Road Safety - **Motorcycle and scooter safety** – work commenced in partnership with ACC, the Ashburton District Council and the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee to develop a local event during Motor Cycle Awareness month (September, 2021) and to promote motorcycle and scooter safety programmes.

Concluding Remarks

Ashburton District has developed a robust coalition of government and community stakeholders, working across a range of sectors, under the Safe Community “umbrella”.

Working collaboratively and the sharing of skills, knowledge, resources, information, ideas and experience between local community safety agencies will increase community safety in Ashburton District over time.

Thanks to the Ashburton District Council and ACC for their support of this project.

