

Water experts front lake issues

About 180 Lake Hood residents gathered at the Lake House restaurant on Monday night to hear how the Lake Hood Water Quality Taskforce is battling algal bloom, which has seen a health warning on the lake since January.

Taskforce Chair David West welcomed Mayor Neil Brown, Council chief executive Hamish Riach, councillors, Ecan councillor Ian Mackenzie, and introduced the taskforce and expert advisors who are helping to tackle the cyanobacteria.

Mr Riach said it was great to see groups, organisations, experts, and residents come together to problem-solve the new water quality issue at Lake Hood.

"It is the second time the 22-year-old lake has had a health warning placed on it, but the taskforce has already made good progress since the first algal bloom in May," he said.

The purchase of a weed harvester, an aerator trial, commissioning of a NIWA report and extensive research of mitigation options globally were the first steps. The NIWA report would inform the development of a management plan.

"They're getting the right scientific advice to narrow down a range of options to what will be the best fit for the lake, and its community," Mr Riach said.

He was also impressed by the range of questions and solutions that residents put forward for the taskforce to consider. "It's great to see the community being open and honest with their ideas and questions."



Phycologist and water quality scientist Donna Sutherland joined remotely to help answer questions. She specialises in algae-based bioremediation of pollutants in aquatic systems.

Dr Sutherland said that algae need several conditions to thrive, with the one aspect being targeted by the taskforce being the control of nutrients.

She said that having a small amount of weed is helpful in balancing nutrients, and the weed harvester that Council has agreed to purchase will help control growth from this coming spring.

Mr West said the weed is like a lawn, it helps keep the lake floor in control and takes nutrients out of the water, but too much weed would interfere with the nutrient balance.

Residents were told that no more grass carp would be added to the 3000 or

so previously introduced to the lake to manage weed levels. As many have outlived their lifespan, a natural reduction in carp would also reduce nutrient recycling in the lake.

The presentation said that cyanobacterial blooms have been increasing in number around the world and are being exacerbated by climate change. New Zealand has not been immune with health warnings on 26 locations in Otago, Southland and Canterbury alone this summer, so the issue was not isolated to Lake Hood.

Environment Canterbury's regular testing of cyanobacteria shows that levels in the lake are increasing, so Council continues to advise people to take heed of Te Whatu Ora's health warning and avoid all contact recreation in the lake.

Regular progress updates will be published on the Council website.

SHORT AND SWEET

LIBRARY FOR SALE

The Ashburton District Council's former library building at 180 Havelock Street is officially on the market. The high-profile site is 3053 square metres and is being sold on an as is, where is basis; it was home to the Ashburton library for nearly 60 years. Colliers was appointed to sell the property after real estate agents were invited to submit expressions of interest for the job. The building and land is being offered for sale by deadline private treaty closing 4pm on Tuesday 19 March, unless sold prior.

ALCOHOL PLAN

Council's updated Local Alcohol Policy, reviewed and changed after feedback from the community late last year, comes into effect on 14 March. A one-way door restriction now applies to all on-licences in the whole district from 1am (previously it only applied in the Ashburton CBD) and licensed footpath areas can be used by taverns, restaurants and cafes from 7am until 1am (previously midnight). Maximum trading hours for taverns, including hotel bars, remain 7am-2am, and for restaurants or cafes 7am-1am.

Mayor - Neil Brown

The future of Three Waters reforms

I was pleased to hear this week that Government would repeal the Three Waters reforms next week and replace them with a model that is much more akin to our Council's thinking.

The new legislation will ensure Councils meet water standards and consistently invest in their assets – this is something that we've done fairly well in Mid Canterbury over the decades and our latest Long Term Plan has details of improvements that will help make sure we continue to hit those targets.

When you see road cones on our urban streets, it's a good bet that water or wastewater pipes are being renewed or the reticulation network expanded. It's essential core work and our urban ratepayers all belong to a big group where everyone pays the same set charge and the work gets done.

While we are confident we could go it alone, teaming up with other like-minded councils in the interests of efficiency and economy of scale also makes sense, so we will be having conversations with our neighbours.

Government's version of the reforms, Local Water Done Well, is largely what we and many other councils that belong to Communities 4 Local Democracy have been advocating for, and that is to deliver the necessary infrastructure while respecting community property rights.

Different areas are in different positions and the new legislation will allow us to work together: We will continue to keep doing important three waters investment in our district but also find out what a regional model looks like, and if there are economies of scale.

We just want the best option for our communities, and that wasn't the one

size fits all approach of the previous government.

We have been working with staff on the final words for the Long Term Plan consultation document, due to be released to the community on 27 March. You'll be seeing and hearing a lot about this 10-year plan and our engagement approach will include some formal meetings but we'll also be attending community group and service club meetings, having road shows and popping up in places where we know people will be.

We'll also be promoting the consultation across our digital platforms and collecting feedback in many ways, including traditional surveys, public forums and quick polls.

Our website will also host a wealth of Long term Plan information, including the consultation documents, frequently asked questions and other supporting



information.

We're calling this Long Term Plan, "Five for the Future" in recognition of five big questions we have for the community.:

- What should our kerbside green waste collection look like?
- Should we invest in aquatic water play and where/what should it be? (this includes an option to refurbish the Tinwald pool)
- What should we do with Balmoral Hall and the old Polytech land?
- Should we get out of providing stockwater?
- When should we extend EA Networks Centre stadium (and by how much)?

Don't be afraid to tell us what you think when feedback opens on 28 March.

Water treatment plant takes shape

Work on the new \$4.6m Mount Somers membrane treatment plant is on track, with commissioning programmed for May.

The plant is a smaller version of the new Methven water membrane treatment plant that opened late last year, ending the need for boil water notices that were often issued after heavy rain.

A new building is currently under construction to house treatment equipment for the Mount Somers plant, and new soakage fields, settling ponds and drainage pipework have been completed.

The upgrade includes eight new tanks which will increase storage capacity from 125 cubic meters to 240 cubic meters.

Group Manager Infrastructure and Open Spaces Neil McCann said a short shutdown this week was needed so water from the Mount Somers supply intake could be fed to the new building.

“We’re really pleased at how this project is



The new Mount Somers water treatment plant under construction.

tracking and this will be the first of several improvements for the Mount Somers supply.

“We are also proposing money be put

aside in the Long Term Plan to investigate a supplementary water source, to support future growth in the town, and assist when demand increases during dry periods.”

Talk It Up Tuesdays are back for 2024!

TALK IT UP TUESDAYS

Every Tuesday: 1pm - 2pm
Ashburton Library
No booking required.

Elected Councillors are looking forward to restarting their weekly Talk it up Tuesday sessions with the community, in a new spot at Te Whare Whakare, the new library and civic centre.

Two councillors will be on deck every Tuesday from 1pm-2pm on the ground floor of the library, at a table near the Council’s Customer Services counter.

Democracy and Engagement Group Manger Toni Durham said the drop-in sessions had been running almost a year and were popular with members of the public.

“It’s a great chance to talk about a burning

issue you’ve got on your mind, or about a great idea that would benefit the district, plus if it’s something that Customer Services can sort out then the Councillors can point them in the right direction.”

She said Councillors valued having another opportunity to connect with their community.

“We have a Long Term Plan coming out for consultation soon and there is plenty to talk about. Some people find our submission process a bit daunting, so this provides a more informal setting for our elected members to hear from a broad cross-section of the community.

“So, come along and have a chat and a biscuit with our Councillors.”

PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a proposal to temporarily close roads to ordinary vehicle traffic to enable the holding of the **Ashburton Car Club’s Sealed Autocross Event**.

Roads proposed to be closed:

- **Seaside Road, from Bonningtons Road to Fitzgerald Road**

Period of Closure: **From 8am to 6pm on Sunday 17 March 2024.**

This proposed closure is made under the Local Government Act 1974 – Schedule 10 (11 (e) and will be considered at the Council meeting on **21 February 2024**. Any person objecting to the proposal should lodge a notice of their objection and grounds for their objection in writing by post or email to the Council, 5 Baring Square West, Ashburton by 4pm, **Friday 16 February 2024**.

NEIL McCANN
Group Manager Infrastructure and Open Spaces

WORKS NOTICES

Graham Street/McMurdo Street - Traffic management (including one-way or full road closure) is in place at the intersection of McMurdo and Graham Streets until 29 February, as part of the SH1 improvements project. Access through the intersection will change, depending on work being done. Be prepared for a short detour, if posted.

Walker Street - Closed between Phillip and Elizabeth Street while contractors install new water and sewer pipes. Elizabeth Street outside the hospital is one-way (traffic running west to east). Hospital access remains.

Maronan Road - Traffic management is in place on Maronan Road while contractors rehabilitate a section between the Hinds River and just north of Swamp Road.

Thompsons Track - Closed between Braemar and Pole Roads until 15 March for road rehabilitation. Detours in place.

Tinwald viaduct - Closed until late February while contractors work on Waka Kotahi’s SH1 Tiwald corridor improvements project.

Back Track and Barkers Road - Back Track is closed between Woods Road and Highbank Cairnbrae Road from 6 February until 8 March for repair and sealing. Barkers Road to Back Track is closed from 7-13 February for maintenance and sealing.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at **Council Chambers, 2 Baring Square East, unless specified. Meeting agendas are online at ashburtondc.govt.nz**

Council Meeting, Wednesday 21 February, 1pm

Ashburton Water Zone Committee, Tuesday 27 February, 1pm

Council Agencies - Six-month reports, Wednesday 28 February, 9.30am

FEB 23
from 6pm

Gala dinner Ashburton Aviation Museum

Get your tickets now and celebrate at the black-tie, red carpet business event of the year! **R18**

ANZ BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2024

Meet Mid Canterbury’s Best in Business

businessoftheyear.nz

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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 6am-9pm (pools 7pm, gym 8pm)
Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 5pm, gym 6pm)

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

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