

Council Minutes – 6 March 2024

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 6 March 2023, commencing at 1pm in the Hine Paaka Council Chamber, Te Whare Whakatere, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton.

Present

His Worship the Mayor, Neil Brown; Deputy Mayor Liz McMillan and Councillors Leen Braam, Carolyn Cameron, Russell Ellis, Phill Hooper, Lynette Lovett, Rob Mackle, Tony Todd and Richard Wilson.

In attendance

Hamish Riach (Chief Executive), Toni Durham (GM Democracy & Engagement), Jane Donaldson (GM Strategy & Compliance), Leanne Macdonald (GM Business Support), Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces), Sarah Mosley (GM People & Facilities), and Phillipa Clark (Governance Team Leader).

Staff present for the duration of their reports: Mark Low (Strategy & Policy Manager), Tayyaba Latif (Policy Advisor), Femke van der Valk (Corporate Planner), Richard Wood (Sport & Recreation Manager), Laretta Smith (Accountant), Renee Julius (Property Manager) and Jacqui Watson (Property Legal Counsel).

1 Apologies

Nil.

2 Extraordinary Business

Nil.

3 Declarations of Interest

Nil.

Presentations

- Digital Waitaha Charitable Trust – 2.4pm – 5-3.07pm.
- RDR Management Ltd – 3.28pm – 4.06pm
- Ashburton Contracting Ltd – 4.51pm – 5.32pm

Public Forum

Historic Places Mid Canterbury (HPMC) representatives Nigel Gilkison and Maxine Watson spoke about their concerns that Council is reconsidering a previously agreed decision to upgrade Balmoral Hall. They said it was disappointing for HPMC to be again commenting on the possibility of another heritage building being lost.

Key points –

- HPMC questioned the significant increase in cost to refurbish the Hall, since it was first budgeted in the LTP 2021-31, and asked why the upgrade didn't proceed in 2022 as proposed
- Concerned that an opportunity has been lost to restore the last remnant of one of Ashburton's earliest education facilities
- Council's response to HPMC's official information request in January was "woefully inadequate" – a formal complaint has now been lodged with the Ombudsman by HPMC
- The sprung floor at the Hall is a key feature and is valued by the many dance school users
- HPMC has no objection to Council selling off the remainder of the former Polytech land but believe the Balmoral Hall should be preserved

- HPMC request that Council proceeds with the promised refurbishment, rather than consulting, that a heritage appraisal be undertaken and that the LTP acknowledges that the existing building has significant cultural and social wellbeing values. They would like to see previous budgets being provided for public to comment on, and for possible alternatives to demolition considered.

The Mayor thanked the presenters and advised that Council is yet to make a decision on whether the Balmoral Hall will be retained or sold, and will be going to the community with a proposal in the Long-Term Plan 2024-34. He invited Historic Places Mid Canterbury to also make a submission through that process.

Post meeting note: Council officers will provide HPMC with a breakdown of the \$1.3m budget now proposed. Further clarification has now been forwarded in response to the LGOIMA request – Officers have provided a link to the Long-Term Plan 2021-31 where the Balmoral Hall refurbishment was planned for Year 2 (\$428k) along with an explanation that when further detailed investigations of the refurbishment work were undertaken, it triggered the requirement to obtain a building consent and to undertake additional works to what was originally scoped.

The presentation concluded at 1.17pm.

4 Confirmation of Minutes – 21/02/24

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 February 2024, be taken as read and confirmed.

McMillan/Cameron

Carried

5 Audit & Risk Committee – 14/02/24

That Council receives the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on Wednesday 14 February 2024.

Ellis/Todd

Carried

6 Biodiversity Advisory Group – 12/02/24

That Council receives the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting held on Monday 12 February 2024.

Braam/Lovett

Carried

7 Draft Community Engagement Policy

That the consultation trigger for Council's elderly persons housing stock be set at 30% in the draft Community Engagement Policy.

Cameron/Ellis

Carried

That Council approves the Draft Community Engagement Policy 2024, for consultation alongside the Long-Term Plan 2024-34.

McMillan/Ellis

Carried

8 EA Networks Centre Masterplan – approval of consultation document

That Council approves the Draft EA Networks Centre & Surrounding Land 30 Year Masterplan and Consultation Document, for consultation alongside the Long-Term Plan 2024-34.

Braam/Lovett

Carried

9 Road Closure – Ashburton Car Club Sealed Autocross

That Council permits Seaside Road, from Bonningtons Road to Fitzgerald Road, to be closed from 8.00 am Sunday, 17 March 2024 until 6.00 pm the same day, to allow the Sealed Autocross Event to take place.

Ellis/Todd

Carried

10 Financial Variance Report

Officers were asked to report back with more detail on Council’s forestry operation, specifically the return on investment after harvesting.

A breakdown on the proposed \$300k Oval Pavilion expenditure was also sought.

That Council receives the January 2024 financial variance report.

Cameron/Braam

Carried

11 Councillor Reports

That the Deputy Mayor’s report be received.

McMillan/Cameron

Carried

12 Mayor’s Report

That the Mayor’s report be received.

Mayor/Cameron

Carried

Business transacted with the public excluded –2.09pm

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely – the general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

Item No	General subject of each matter to be considered:	In accordance with Section 48(1) of the Act, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter:	
13	Audit & Risk Committee – 14/02/24	Sections 7(2)(a) & h)	Protection of privacy of natural persons & Commercial activities
14	ADC_EA Working Group – 19/02/24	Section 7(2)(h)	Commercial activities
15	Library & Civic Centre PCG 20/02/24	Section 7(2)(h)	Commercial activities
17	People & Capability Report	Section 7(2)(a)	Protection of privacy of natural persons

McMillan/Braam

Carried

Council resumed in open meeting at 2.45pm.

Digital Waitaha Charitable Trust

Neysa Koizumi and Megan Rutter spoke about the on-line digital safety programmes they are delivering to youth, and to people working with youth. The approach is to reach out to young people from the moment they start using their devices and provide strategies such as “*Stop, Block, Talk*” to help keep them safe from unwanted material.

An event being planned for June, “*For Youth by Youth*”, will be an opportunity for panel-led discussion including those working in the social media space, to look at what needs to change. The Trust are planning to use the Te Whare Whakatere Event Space and put their resource material into the Library.

Neysa and Megan were thanked for their presentation and invited to return to Council and share their research at a later date.

Council adjourned for afternoon tea from 3.07pm to 3.28pm.

RDR Management Ltd

Tony McCormick and Jen Crawford presented an overview of RDRML operations.

Key points:

- Fish screen has been operational for two years and is successfully keeping fish from getting into irrigation, returning them to the river
- Flood repair work (from June 2021) is underway. \$5m of the work on Ashburton River is covered by insurance.
- Rakitata River revival – looking to carry out an economic impact study. Relationships are important and Council’s support is important to ensure the asset endures. Need to find common ground with Arowhenua and start the conversation now – not wait until consent renewal. Council’s help to engage with mana whenua will be welcomed.
- Shut-down in May will be an opportunity to look at the scheme’s infrastructure and do repairs. Work has been done on an asset management plan and long-term plan (beyond 20 years).

The presentation concluded at 4.06pm.

Business transacted with the public excluded – 4.06pm

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely – the general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

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16	EPH Units – Design & Build Tender	Section 7(2)(h)	Commercial activities
	ACL Quarterly report	Section 7(2)(h)	Commercial activities

Braam/Hooper

Carried

Business transacted with the public excluded now in open meeting

- **EPH Units at 1-16 Friendship Lane – award of design & build tender**

That Council approves the appointment of BP Construction Limited as the preferred contractor for the demolition of the existing affordable elderly persons housing units at 1-16 Friendship Lane, Ashburton, and the construction of 16 new units (as a two stage project, with eight units demolished and rebuilt at a time) at the same site, for the tendered price of \$3,073,668.00 (plus GST).

Braam/Ellis

Carried

Council resumed in open meeting and concluded at 5.32pm.

[Confirmed by Council on 20 March 2024]

MAYOR