

Lake data will help scientists

Council has begun planning a monitoring programme at Lake Hood to better understand the water temperature and level of dissolved oxygen in two areas of the lake.

The monitoring will start in September and the data will help create a base line of lake conditions that will assist scientists looking at ways to inhibit the growth of cyanobacteria in the lake next summer.

Cyanobacteria blooms in warm temperatures and the algae reduces dissolved oxygen when it sinks and decomposes.

Group Manager of Infrastructure and Open Spaces Neil McCann said Council staff were already regularly meeting with Professor Susie Wood from Lincoln University, and scientists from the National Institute of Water and Atmosphere (NIWA), and sharing information about the lake.

“We’re also going to create a hydrodynamic model of the lake to simulate water circulation patterns, which are key to understanding how nutrients move about the lake and settle, and then contribute to the algae blooms.”

Health New Zealand last week lifted its health warning for Lake Hood, which had been in place since March because of



levels of potentially toxic cyanobacteria.

Mr McCann said that the university scientists will also help Council consider different products that could be trialled in the lake and canals to mitigate the further development of algal blooms.

“One of these is a sonar solution, which would use pressure waves to break the algae cells and inhibit their growth. There have been many other solutions suggested but we need to determine a cost effective product that will be suitable

for Lake Hood.

“We have to figure out a long-term way of managing or inhibiting the growth of the cyanobacteria when the weather gets warm and it’s not as simple as flushing the lake, because we don’t typically have access to much water from the Ashburton River during the drier summer months.”

Mr McCann will also be talking to lake residents at the annual meeting of the Huntington Park Property Owners Association on 7 August.

Viaduct to close to vehicles

The Tinwald viaduct will be closed to vehicles until KiwiRail can repair an overhead beam that was damaged by an excavator being towed on a trailer a week ago.

There are concerns that another strike on the rail bridge before repairs can be made would result in significant structural damage. The bridge remains safe for trains to use but the road below it (Melcombe Street) will be closed as a precautionary measure until repairs to the impact beam are made.

The temporary closure will be in place once traffic management plans for the closure are approved.

The bridge has a low clearance for vehicles travelling underneath it and a history of frequent strikes – 13 in the past five years. Engineers recommended the road beneath it be temporarily closed to motorists until repairs are made. A full road closure will be needed for the repair period; a timeframe for the work is not yet available.

Pedestrians and cyclists can still use the viaduct, but vehicles must cross the railway line at Compton Street, to the south. Signs alerting motorists to the temporary closure will be in place.

Community groups benefit from funding

Seventy-three community groups will receive a little over \$263,000 when Council distributes its community grants this month.

Twenty-one sports teams will also receive \$15,000 from the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund to help cover the costs of travelling to regular competition.

The grants were approved as part of the Annual Plan, which comes into effect this month.

The recipients include rural libraries, agencies like Age Concern, St John and Connecting Mid Canterbury, as well as groups running projects, community events, biodiversity projects, looking after halls and heritage buildings, and providing school holiday programmes.

The biggest category was community agencies, where 18 groups received a collective \$72,500.

Deputy mayor Liz McMillan said it was always a pleasure to be able to help groups in the community with money to keep their good work going.

“The total fund was oversubscribed by a long way this year and we know some groups are finding it tough. We really value the work they do, much of it voluntary, and have tried to support



as many as we can.”

Amongst the successful applicants this year were:

- Order of St John, \$7500 to help run the health shuttle in Ashburton
- Ashburton Aviation Museum, \$3500 to put towards two heat pumps in the function area of their new hangar
- Ashburton County Scottish Society, \$4000 to help replace the old bar heaters in their hall on Creek Road with heat pumps
- The Tinwald Scout Group, \$4368 to help build a new boundary fence
- Ashburton Indoor Bowls, \$3000 to help towards the cost of providing padded chairs in its supper room.

SHORT AND SWEET

JET WASH ON WAY

Parts of Longbeach Road, Seafield Road and Beach Road East will be water-blasted at the end of the month by a special roading machine. Bitumen that has flushed to the surface after repeated sealing becomes slippery in wet conditions, and the high pressure water wash will remove the smooth surface and roughen it up to increase traction.

CANDIDATE LIST

Want to keep an eye on who is standing for Council or other roles in the local elections? Head to voteashburton.nz to find information about how to become a candidate and who has been nominated already. Clicking on the Current Nominations tab will take you to the electionz.com page for the Ashburton District, where you can see nominations received in the various wards and mayoral race, as well as for the Methven Community Board and Braided Rivers Community Trust.

CITIZENS ADVICE

Do you have a question about your rights or obligations and not sure where to go for help? Drop in to the Citizens Advice Bureau at the Ashburton Library, every Wednesday, 5.30pm-7.30pm. The service is free, confidential and independent, and available to everyone.

MATARIKI VIEWING

The Ashburton Astronomy Club is holding a free public viewing of the Matariki star cluster, at Argyle Park on Saturday 12 July. You’ll need to get up early and wrap up warm, as the viewing is from 5.45am-7am (weather permitting). All welcome.

STOCK ON SH1

NZ Transport Agency is reminding motorists to be vigilant for wandering stock on its Stage Highways, after a spate of incidents reported recently around the South Island. Owners may be held responsible when it comes to any damage caused by their animals. Owners or managers of stock are reminded to check fences and take care moving animals.

Rates rebate: Check if you qualify

Council will soon be writing to more than 1000 households in the district, inviting them to apply for a rates rebate.

The rebate scheme is run by Government and administered by Council – it is a partial discount on a rates bill.

Acting CE Neil McCann said 1150 rebate applications were received in the 2024-25 financial year.

“In August we’ll send application forms to all those households who received those rebates and remind them the rebate is not automatic and they need to apply annually. The new financial year has just begun and residents will be receiving their first quarterly rates invoice at the end of July.”

You can use a rates rebate calculator online to check if you qualify, or you can ask our Customer Services team. You will need proof of your total household income before tax for 1 April 2024-31 March 2025 as part of the application process.

Mr McCann said Council staff would be visiting Methven and Rakaia in October to talk to rural residents about the rates



rebate scheme. “We’ll be advertising these events well in advance and people can come along for a face-to-face chat.

“The rebate is calculated on household income, the amount of rates you pay, if you have dependants living with you and if you have a SuperGold card. Often people don’t realise they qualify for a rebate, so we encourage people to use the online calculator to check if they meet the threshold or give us a call.”

The maximum rebate you can get is \$805 and people may be eligible for all or only part of this amount.

Eligible households can have income up to \$32,210; but households getting more than this may still get a rebate, but maybe not the full amount – for example if your annual rates are \$3000 and you have no dependants, your income can be up to \$40,900 and you will still get a rebate.

More info at ashburtondc.govt.nz

COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

Wednesday 30 July, **Three Waters Committee** (live-streamed), 9.30am

Wednesday 30 July, **Audit & Risk Committee** (live-streamed), 1pm

Wednesday 30 July, **Council Activity Briefings** (live-streamed), 3pm

WORKS NOTICES

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

Nicholson Street - Closed between Belt Road and Davidson Street from Monday 9 June to Friday 25 July while contractors install utility mains to supply a new development. Access remains for residents.

Philip Street - Closed between Oak Grove and Grigg Street until Friday 25 July while new water pipes are installed by Rooney Earthmoving. Resident access remains.

Tancred Street - Closed between William Street and Chalmers Avenue from 14 July to 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

VISITING OUR DISTRICT?

Here's how we roll when it comes to recycling:

- Clean glass bottles in the green crate
- Clean hard plastics 1, 2 and 5 (no lids), and clean cardboard, paper and tins in the yellow bin
- Food waste and all other rubbish in the red bin



New chapter for Riff Raff

The Ashburton Library is saying farewell to its long-time reading dog Riff Raff (above), who is retiring in August along with his owner and Library Manager, Jill Watson.

After much time searching for a replacement, Riff Raff has discovered and vetted Oi, a “Certified Canine Friend”.

Oi is an 8-year-old Kelpie Cross who loves to cuddle. Her supplier of treats is our own Debbie from Customer Services.

Oi (below) and Debbie will be in Pioneer Hall on Thursdays from 3.30pm–4pm so kids can come along and read to her. There will be an official handover of canine duties after the school holidays, on Thursday 17 July at 3.30pm.



Gallery hosts annual Society of Arts show

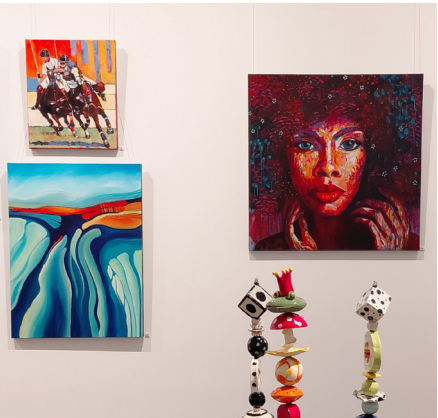
The Ashburton Society of Arts (ASA) returns to the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum this month for its 61st Annual Exhibition.

The exhibition is a visual delight, bringing together works from local, national, and guest artists in a variety of media.

All exhibited works in this exhibition are available to purchase and the commissions from sales directly contribute to the running of the ASA studio at 53 Short Street.

ASA members will be present at the gallery every day throughout the exhibition, so this is a great opportunity to visit and learn more about one of Ashburton’s longest established art organisations.

The ASA 61st Annual Exhibition guest



artists include Gawie Bosman, Maisie Willis, Mark James, Jan Byres, and Renata Przynoga.

The exhibition will run until 1 August.

It's a sign!

Who's been watching the brick project at the corner of Oak Grove and Walnut Avenue take shape?

It will soon be displaying a new Ashburton Domain sign, replacing an old wooden one that was taken down when the kerb and channel was renewed on Walnut Avenue a year ago. It's been designed to look similar to the sign on the brick fence at the corner of Walnut Avenue and West Street/State Highway 1.

New Ashburton Domain signs will also be fixed to existing brick fences at the corner of West and Wills Street, and at the corner of Elizabeth and Grigg Streets.



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)