

VR helps improve driving skills

Members of the Ashburton District Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee had a chance this week to test out a driving simulator they hope will help more young people improve their driving skills and get their licence.

Mayor Neil Brown, who was first to have a go, said having a driver's licence was important in a district with no public transport and where people often needed to travel to work.

"We also know that having a driver's licence helps young people make better choices and keeps them out of trouble with police."

There are already driving simulators at Ashburton College and Mt Hutt College, and a third is to be installed in Ashburton, possibly at the Ashburton Library.

The CoDriVR driving simulator at Ashburton College has been used 122 times a month on average since it was installed last year. Students start at Level 1 and can progress up to Level 8, by donning a Virtual Reality headset and successfully negotiating local "real life" intersections that have been programmed into the simulator.

The stimulator tracks lane position, gap selection and indicator use, and drivers can only progress to the next level if they pass the simulated scenarios.

There are also scenarios for open road cornering and the simulations get trickier as more traffic and higher speeds are added.

Nine simulators have been installed in secondary schools in the Mid and South Canterbury area, able to be accessed by nearly 5000 students, and promoter Rhys Gardner told the Ashburton road safety



Claire Paterson helps Ashburton District Mayor Neil Brown navigate the Virtual Reality world of learning to drive.

committee that they were a great tool to support young people learning to drive.

The simulator helped build muscle memory and awareness so that students were better prepared to pass driving tests and the technology was improving and evolving all the time, he said.

The road safety committee meets every three months and includes representatives from Council, Waka Kotahi, ACADS, Fire and Emergency and Police.

Mayor Brown said he had arranged a meeting at the site of a planned heavy vehicle weigh station just north of the SH1 Rakaia River bridge so engineers could

explain the road safety aspects of the facility.

Council says the southbound weigh station has the potential to cause nose-to-tail collisions as highway traffic is surprised by slow-moving trucks that are either entering the weigh station for weighing or turning back onto the highway after being weighed.

Mayor Brown said an engineer from Wellington would be on site later this month with interested parties to show how trucks would be able to safely pull into and exit the site.

This is Bob,



Bob is a sober driver,
be like Bob.

GET HOME
SAFE

DRIVER REFRESHER

Age Concern, Waka Kotahi and Council are teaming up to run a refresher course for older drivers on **Friday 24 February**.

The free course is classroom-based and will focus on traffic rules and safe driving practices, helping you stay on the road and independent for longer. It will run from 10am-2pm, at the Senior Centre. Another course is planned in October.

To register, email ageconcernashburton@xtra.co.nz.

Lynette Lovett, Councillor

Working together for your community

It's been a pleasure attending the triennial meetings of reserve boards on behalf of council recently, and to see rural communities in action ensuring their local hall or reserve is kept in good shape.

These hall and reserve boards are made up of resourceful and knowledgeable volunteers committed to making sure their patch of Mid Canterbury has assets that attract local families to use, from tennis courts to venues for a 21st or wedding.

It's not always easy, given everyone's busy lives and increasing compliance for such community facilities, but these

assets have long local histories and are places where many happy memories have been made!

Thank you to all those community people who have been elected once again, or perhaps for the first time, on to boards across the district - your work is valued and appreciated, and Council will continue to work with you.

Another way to work for your community is to stand for Council and that opportunity will present again for the Western Ward with the by-election coming up shortly.

With that in mind, I wish to share some thoughts for the potential new applicants and what a future Councillor

should consider.

Know the community you are representing is vital; communication and engagement are essential to express their views and be the community voice.

Some attributes that would assist the successful applicant include vision and goal setting, listening skills, and knowledge of governance and local policies.

It goes without saying that time and passion must be dedicated to the role as it is not just 9-5. Councillors receive phone calls and messages every day of the week, from morning until night, on a wide variety of subjects.



Teamwork and collaboration is essential too.

At the council table we all bring different views, values and ideas whilst respecting each other, and a lot of discussion and debate happens before we make a decision that is in the best interest of the wider community, not just individual groups.

I have enjoyed my last two terms around the council table and while it has at times been very challenging, it has also been rewarding and I am looking forward to this term and what lies ahead.

Sharing treasures, special local stories

A water filter designed in the 1890s, archives of the Tuarangi Knights Templar, and a saxophone are among special items that will be on display soon at the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum.

The items have been donated or acquired in the past year by the Ashburton Museum and Historical Society, whose collection is looked after by the gallery and museum team.

The new acquisitions form the basis of an exhibition called Sharing Histories, Gifts of 2022 that will run from Saturday 11 February until Wednesday 29 March.

Art gallery and museum director Shirin Khosraviani said the exhibition was a chance to explore some of the treasured objects, archives and photographs that had been generously donated and acquired by the Ashburton Museum and Historical Society last year.

“This inaugural exhibition will return each year, showcasing these special and fascinating acquisitions and exploring why they are significant to the Ashburton district.

“While the public can visit from Saturday, we’re inviting people to join us for the official opening of Sharing Histories on Wednesday 15 February, at 6pm, and learn a little more about what is on display.”

Visitors to the exhibition will get the chance to explore the range of items acquired and their unique stories, as well as learn about how items are assessed, accepted and stored by museum staff.

One of the items on display will be the W. H. Rule Acme water filter, from around



Staff of Hannahs Shoe Shop - photo by Rex Studios, taken on 30 November 1944. It is part of the Ashburton Museum and Historical Society collection.

1890. William Henry Rule was an engaged member of the Ashburton community who manufactured and sold water filters (during the height of popularity for pure, clean filtered water), after winning the local A&P show’s water filter competition in 1891.

This water filter was recently purchased by the Ashburton Museum and Historical Society for its collection.

Other interesting items that will be on display include the Tuarangi Knights Templar archives, theatre programmes, a saxophone and a miniature snapshot album of Ashburton.

Ms Khosraviani said items offered to the

museum and art gallery were first assessed by staff as to whether they had historical, cultural, social, spiritual, scientific and/or artistic significance to the Hakatere Ashburton region.

“We look at whether the item is particularly rare or is a good representative example of its kind, whether we already have similar items in our collection, and what the provenance or back story of the item is.

“Another consideration is whether it can be properly stored in our museum and preserved by our team.”

Accepting donations into the museum is in partnership with the historical society and guided by a collection policy.

Local numbers matter in Census count-up

Ashburton residents are being encouraged to take part in the 2023 Census because the information gathered will help Council get a clearer picture of what you, your family and your community need.

The census is run by Statistics New Zealand and on Tuesday 7 March every person who is in the country that night will need to do the survey. Packs will arrive by mail soon.

Council Democracy and Engagement

Group Manager Toni Durham said census answers were confidential, but peoples’ responses combined helped Council, government agencies and other groups plan or grow services.

“The majority of questions are the same as for previous censuses, because that helps us understand how the country is changing over time. It also alerts us to where our future needs will be, for example, we may

find we have more young adults, migrants or an aging population, and we can then tailor or plan Council services in response.”

“Data is power and it helps us make better decisions about our communities.”

If you need support to fill in your forms, the Ashburton Public Library, on Havelock Street, and the Citizens Advice Bureau on Cass Street, will have people available to help with completing your census.

TIPS FOR BIKING IN OUR TOWNS

Communicate your intentions: Use arm signals to let other people on the road know what you’re doing, so they can anticipate your movements and give you space. Always check to make sure the traffic around you has seen and understood your signals before you move. If in doubt, pull over and wait.

Position yourself to be seen: Ride in a position where you can see others and others can see you. Keep a steady line and avoid blind spots. Only ride as far left as it feels safe to do so. Maintain a steady line so drivers can predict your movements.



TRIENNIAL MEETINGS

Mayfield Reserve and Hall Board
- Tuesday 28 March, 7.30pm at the Mayfield hall

LAKES OPEN DAY

A public information day focusing on the water quality and health of Ōtūwharekai/Ashburton Lakes, will be held on the waterfront of Lake Clearwater on **Saturday 25 February 2023, 11am-2pm.**

The event will help share the work under way to address water quality issues within the lakes and give people the chance to ask questions and learn more.

PUBLIC NOTICES

ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a road closure for the purpose of allowing the Ashburton Car Club to hold its Gravel Sprint Meeting.

- **Upper Downs Road**, from Quarry Road to Hinds Gorge Road

Period of closure: From 8am until 6pm on **Sunday, 18 February 2023.**

This notice of closure is made under the Local Government Act 1974 - Schedule 10 (11 (e)). It will be an offence under the above regulations for any person other than under the authority of an authorised permit to use the roads/streets for ordinary vehicular traffic during the period of closure.

NEIL McCANN
Group Manager Infrastructure and Open Spaces

ROAD WORKS NOTICES

Thompsons Track – current to 31 March. Thompsons Track between Winchmore Lauriston Road and Line Road is temporarily closed for roading maintenance and reseal works. Detour available.

Mayfield Valetta Road – current to 6 April. Mayfield Valetta Road between Tinwald Westerfield Mayfield Road and Anama Valetta Road is temporarily closed during the day for rehabilitation. Resident access remains, detour available.

Holmes Road – current to 17 March. Holmes Road between Mt Hutt Station Road and Barkers Road is closed for a full road reconstruction and drainage installation. Detour options available.

Railway Terrace East (Rakaia) – current to 28 February. Railway Terrace East from Rolleston Street to Bridge Street SH1 is temporarily closed for work associated with Waka Kotahi’s weigh station project.

Pudding Hill Road - current until 17 February. Pudding Hill Road, between Arundel Rakaia Gorge Road and Longford Road, is closed for a stock underpass to be constructed. Detours are available; resident access remains.

ALLENS ROAD - current until 9 April. Allens Road between Carters Road and Turton Street will be closed while the North West Ashburton wastewater system is extended and connected to the town network. Detour available.

View a map of all current and upcoming road closures in the district by going to our website ashburtondc.govt.nz

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are held in the Council Chambers, 137 Havelock Street, (unless otherwise advised).

Council Meeting - Wednesday 15 February, 1pm (live-streamed)

Council Agencies (6 month report presentations) - Wednesday 22 February, 9.30am

COUNCIL OFFICE

5 Baring Square West
Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri 8.30am - 5pm
Thursday 9am - 5pm

ASHBURTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

180 Havelock Street, Ashburton 7700
Mon - Fri 9.00am - 8.00pm
Sat 10am - 1pm | Sun 1pm - 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 & ASHBURTON MUSEUM

327 West Street
10am - 4pm daily