

Festive fun as East St sparkles

Ashburton's big Christmas tree is putting a sparkle on the town's CBD at night, following a street party to officially kick off the festive season.

Light up the Night attracted about 5000, and the huge crowd sang and danced with entertainers on an open-air stage beside the tree after it was officially lit by Wakanui School student Felicity Varlow.

Felicity won a competition through Light up the Night sponsor Hokonui to flick the switch, which she did to much applause and cheering.

Mayor Neil Brown said it was a terrific night, with sunshine instead of the wet weather that had been forecast during the week. "It was so good to see everyone gathered together in front of the tree. There were people of all ages, and lots of families, and plenty of smiles, so the vibe was really positive."

The Life Dance Academy performed several energetic routines and music was provided by the Ashburton Silver Band, the Ashburton Samoan Christian Congregational Church choir and Ashburton College's student rock band No Sleep at Work.

Mayor Brown said it was awesome to see the local talent on stage so well received by the big and happy crowd. MC for the night was Peter Mac, from Hokonui.

"Thanks also to the crew from the Ashburton Event Centre for their light and sound skills, and to Santa and his elves for



making a special trip."

Food trucks were parked on East Street a short distance away and catered to a steady flow of diners enjoying the festive occasion, and a craft activity station run by the Mid Canterbury Children's Day Trust also had lots of visitors.

Mayor Brown said he hoped that people left the free community event feeling good about the festive season ahead.

"We spend a lot of the summer working on our roads, water and waste, so it was nice to be able to do something really fun for the community and spread some free, Christmas cheer."

Council is also hosting a free outdoor screening of the Christmas movie Arthur Christmas in the Ashburton Domain picnicground, off Elizabeth and Grigg Streets, on Saturday 9 December, with the venue open from 6pm.



SHORT AND SWEET

SANTA PARADE

Walnut Avenue will be closed from State Highway 1 to Oak Grove from 10am-2pm this Saturday for the Santa parade. Part of Creek Road will also be closed. The parade is scheduled to start at 12.30pm, with the closure at 10am allowing the floats to be set up on Walnut Avenue. The parade will begin at Oak Grove and head east along the avenue, doing a U-turn before the traffic lights and heading back to Oak Grove. Christmas-themed floats will later park in the domain for photographs.

BIODIVERSITY PLAN

Council staff are analysing about 60 submissions received on its draft Biodiversity Strategy by the deadline last Sunday. The strategy is about protecting and enhancing our natural environment, and what we can all do to make that happen. Councillors will hear from submitters at a hearing on Thursday 14 December, before deciding on the final form of the document.

LEAK LISTENERS

Council contractors have been pounding the pavements at Tinwald over the past few weeks, using special equipment to listen for water leaks. The work is part of regular monitoring of Council's drinking water network and helps find leaks in the reticulation pipes; sometimes leaks on private property are also identified. The crew will be in action at Tinwald, Methven Hinds and Rakaia over the next four weeks, listening to about 110km of pipes.

GREAT SANTA HUNT

The Great Santa Hunt is back on at the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum these school holidays with a special late night opening event on Wednesday 20 December ... so get your torches ready. All the lights will be turned off for the opening hunt and people will need to use their torches to find all the sneaky Santas in their hiding spots across the facility. The Santas will be hiding all summer, from 21 December to 31 January, so you can come back when the lights are on and look again!

Kelvin Holmes - Methven Community Board We're proud of our patch, so come visit us in paradise

The Methven Community Board held its final meeting for 2023 this week, so it's timely to look forward to the festive season and say Happy Holidays everyone.

Methven is the centre of our world and those who live here are proud of their town and work hard to make it an attractive place, whether that is volunteering time and skills, or building a business that provides goods and services that are needed.

Our patch is a popular place in winter and summer, and it's good to see visitor numbers building again. Some might be tempted to take the inland route because of a Council promotion that is all over social media at the moment, inviting visitors to explore our space - whether they want to soak in hot pools or find an adrenalin fix on a mountainbike!

Some will be visiting family and they will see how Methven has changed and

grown, and has an exciting future.

The community board has an important role to play in making sure Methven has the infrastructure to cope with that growth and road cones around the town mean that work is in progress, whether it is water pipes being renewed or new footpaths laid.

Now it's a good time to tell Council the value of our community board as there is a representation review under way. The review is asking people to be vocal about how they wish to be represented locally, ahead of the next local government elections in 2025.

The review includes topics such as the number of local councillors, wards, Maori representation and boundaries for the Methven Community Board. The community board will be making its own submissions on the review, and we think there is much to be gained from the board's continued existence - I encourage you to make your own



thoughts known in a survey that is open until 17 December.

It's a challenging job at times - we must meet high public expectations while delivering services in an efficient way and keeping rates low. Our community board is an important link to Council and helps inform their decisions on the issues that matter to us.

Like drinking water. It was a monumental occasion to see Methven's new water membrane plant up and running earlier this year - that means the end of boil water notices when the river is in flood - and two new reservoirs will help manage peak demand in summer and winter.

Enjoy the holidays! Come up the road and visit us.

Proctor Park primed for play days

The new playground in Tinwald's Ashbury Grove subdivision will open for business on Friday 1 December, just in time for the school holidays.

The playground will be called Proctor Park, to recognise that the land was previously farmed by the Proctor family before it was bought and subdivided for new residential housing.

The first homes in the subdivision have already been built and are being occupied, after water and wastewater services were connected.

The new playground includes a basketball hoop and asphalt shooting arc, climbing equipment, timber steppers and a flying saucer swing set. There are also bench seats and a picnic table.

Group Manager of Infrastructure and Open Spaces Neil McCann said that although the playground is opening, some security fencing would remain onsite to protect the rest of the park, which is being regrassed.



The new playground in Ashbury Grove is ready for use from Friday.

"There is also some soft landscaping, like trees and shrubs, to be installed and that will happen in autumn when growing conditions are more favourable.

"In the meantime, we encourage people to come down and try out the new play equipment, which is designed to be

durable and last well outdoors."

Proctor Park replaces Grove Street Park, which was on land used to create a new road into the subdivision – the road leads straight to the new park, which is 2980 square metres and three times bigger.

New summer campaign to woo visitors

Council's tourism promotion team has just launched a fresh campaign to encourage visitors to Mid Canterbury over the summer, and is using iconic images and videos inviting people to indulge, be active or explore our spaces.

Two videos have already been released on social media, with a third due to be released this week. The videos show scenes and activities from around the district – the indulge theme features the new Opuke hot pools, beauty therapy, golf, fishing and the art gallery, while the explore theme shows the Ashburton lakes, with boating, tramping and tenting.

Mayor Neil Brown said it was great to see some of the district's best natural attributes being shown in the videos.



"It gives visitors a taste of what they can expect in the Ashburton district. We can be a slice of paradise to relax in and enjoy great food, or we can provide some outdoor therapy in the form of our

Ashburton lakes.

"Visitors, domestic or international, help our local economy because they stay in and play in our district and while tourism operators make a living from them, it is up to all of us who live here to make visitors feel welcome."

The campaign is being orchestrated by Council's new district promotions advisor Shelley Donnelly. Council decided earlier this year to bring visitor promotion back as an inhouse activity, after it had been contracted out to Christchurch NZ for two years.

The summer campaign will run until at least the end of February and encourages people to check out experiences in Mid Canterbury via the website midcanterburynz.com.

WORKS NOTICES

Lagmhor Road/SH1 Tinwald/Agnes Street – Waka Kotahi is installing traffic lights at this intersection so expect traffic management and delays over the coming months. The Lagmhor Road crossing will be closed for two months from 25 September.

Willow Street - Willow Street from Suffolk Street to Beach Road is closed until 21 December so contractors can install new services to a housing project. Detours are in place, residents still have access.

William Street - current until 21 December. William Street and intersections of Kermode and Dobson Streets, will be closed to undertake wastewater upgrading. Residents will still have access and detours will be in place.

Elizabeth Street (hospital end) - current. New water and wastewater pipes are being installed in this area and some roads are temporarily closed. Elizabeth Street, between Grigg and Walker, is currently one-way (west to east) and no street parking is available on this section. Access to Ashburton Hospital remains; resident access remains.

Thompsons Track - current to 21 December. Thompsons Track, between Braemar and Pole Road, will be closed for road rehabilitation. Detour in place; resident access available.

Elizabeth Street - current to 12 December. Elizabeth Street, between Cross and Allison Streets, is closed for the first stage of a wastewater upgrade. Detour in place; no entry from Baker Street. Resident access remains.

Kermode Street - from 30 October to 8 December. Kermode Street, between Mona Square and East Street, is closed for a wastewater upgrade.

Cameron Street - Cameron Street (between SH1 and Park Street) is closed until 21 December, while wastewater pipes are replaced.

Tinwald Westerfield Mayfield Road - current until 20 December. Tinwald Westerfield Mayfield Road is closed between Westerfield School Road and Valetta Westerfield Road while contractors carry out road rehabilitation. Detours are available.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at Council Chambers, 137 Havelock Street, unless specified. Meeting agendas are online at ashburtondc.govt.nz

Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee, Tuesday 5 December, 9.30am

Council Meeting, Wednesday 6 December, 1pm

Biodiversity Strategy hearings, Thursday 14 December, 9am

Council Meeting, Wednesday 20 December, 1pm

For the latest Council news, visit our website ashburtondc.govt.nz/latestnews



Family Movie Night

An outdoor screening of Arthur Christmas, a comedy for the whole family!

Sat 9 Dec from 6pm
Ashburton Domain

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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 9am - 8pm
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 & MUSEUM

327 West Street
10am - 4pm daily