

Feedback on plan to lower speed around schools

The Council is proposing to lower speed limits around the district's schools as one of three key principles in a new draft interim speed management plan, released this week for public feedback.

If the community supports the proposal, 30km/h permanent speed limits would be established outside 16 of the district's urban schools, with 60km/h variable speed limits (applicable during school travel periods only) for five schools on rural roads.

The three Methven schools would also have lower speed limits, but would need to wait for Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency to develop a speed management plan, as they're located on a state highway.

Council Infrastructure Services Group Manager Neil McCann said lowering speed limits outside schools had strong community support when the Council consulted on the topic in 2020, but was not able to proceed under the Ministry of Transport Rule in place at that time.

"Recent changes to government regulations and direction from Waka Kotahi means that once we confirm this draft plan with the community, we can get on with making these changes."

A new Land Transport Rule (Setting of Speed Limits 2022) came into force in



Students from Longbeach School talked to Council recently about slowing the speed of vehicles outside their rural school.

May and allows territorial authorities to develop speed management plans for local roads.

The Council's draft interim plan also proposes giving the Council the ability to lower speeds around the fringes of urban areas as they develop and lowering speeds in areas with a high number of active users, such as walkers and cyclists.

"Our new CBD is an example of a busy area with a 30km/h speed limit already in place which makes it safer for pedestrians and cyclists."

Mr McCann says that the draft interim plan will offer a more flexible approach that

better acknowledges the local conditions and the surrounding environment.

"Previously every change in the speed limit required public consultation before it could be implemented, but now we can intervene faster when changes in the local environment require it and the shift aligns with the adopted speed management plan."

He said the Council would be getting in touch with schools and encouraging them to give feedback. Only last week, students from Longbeach School petitioned the Council for a lower speed limit outside their rural school.

"We have \$600,000 in the budget for road signs and infrastructure improvements associated with the speed limits at schools. If the community supports this plan, we could have new limits around schools as soon as the first term of next year."

Mr McCann expects the community will be passionate about the topic, with the last speed limit review receiving over 400 responses.

"Ultimately for speed limits to work well, they need to be understood and supported by the community."

Submissions close on 16 October. Have your say at ashburtondc.govt.nz/speed

New guard rails for Pudding Hill Rd bridge

Work has begun this week to install new guard rails on the Rangitata Diversion Race bridge on Pudding Hill Road, near Methven.

The \$300,000 project is being undertaken by Fulton Hogan and should be finished by Christmas.

The existing wooden rails will be removed

ROADING ROUNDUP

and replaced with galvanised steel rails.

Council Infrastructure Services Group Manager Neil McCann said the new galvanised steel rails offered more protection and would help keep vehicles

on the bridge in the event of a crash.

"People travelling on Pudding Hill Road over the next few months will find the bridge is down to one-lane while the work is done, but our contractors are working as quickly as they can."

Walkers and cyclists using the Methven walkway will still have access to the track.



Hamish Riach - Chief Executive Officially marking the end of an era

The passing of Queen Elizabeth II marks the end of an era for the Commonwealth, as we will surely not see another monarch reign for 70 years or more.

While the main event is taking place in the United Kingdom, half a world away, there have been discrete preparations in New Zealand towards this time.

Our Council has been receiving advice from the Department of Internal Affairs and the Governor-General's office on events to mark the Queen's passing, acknowledge the change of head of state and allow Kiwis to mourn.

We have a book of condolences in the Ashburton Public Library for residents

to sign and remember Queen Elizabeth, and that book will be preserved here as a historical record. The library has been running a display with a Royal theme, and of course we will soon have a photograph of King Charles III in our chambers.

New Zealand will mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth II with a state memorial service and one-off public holiday on Monday 26 September. Mayor Neil Brown will attend the event in Wellington – it will be broadcast live and be a chance for all of us to celebrate her life and reign.

Our flags in Baring Square West will fly at half-mast until the end of the day of the New Zealand memorial service.

Some in the Ashburton district will have very special memories of her visits here in 1954 and 1981, and at Council we have the signatures of the Queen and Prince Philip in our visitor book from that last occasion.

For those who are interested, the Governor-General's website has a host of information about official events, the Queen and her relationship with New Zealand and about the new King, who has visited New Zealand 10 times between 1970 and 2019.

Another era that is coming to an end is the three-year local government cycle. We are preparing to farewell and acknowledge the service of elected councillors Angus McKay, John Falloon,

Diane Rawlinson and Stuart Wilson, who are all retiring, so there will be at least four new faces on the new council that will be formed after local body elections on 8 October.

Residents should receive their voting papers in the mail in the next few days and I urge you to do your due diligence on all the candidates, then vote and send the papers back in the envelope provided. It's been good to see community groups organising meet-the-candidates events that provide an opportunity for voters to gather good intel.



Voting starts tomorrow in local elections

With voting packs for local elections arriving in mailboxes from tomorrow, all people need to remember is a simple three-step process: Vote, pack and post.

When your pack arrives, read the instructions carefully and complete your voting document. Pack it back into the supplied orange envelope and put it in the post before 4 October to ensure it arrives before the noon deadline on 8 October.

You can also return your completed voting documents to the orange ballot boxes at the Ashburton Public Library, Methven iHub or Ashburton District Council administration building right up until voting closes at noon on 8 October.

If you forgot to enrol or your voting papers haven't arrived by the middle of next week, you may still be able to cast a special vote –



but this can only be done at the Ashburton District Council office during business hours.

Candidate profiles will be included with the packs, but are also available at voteashburton.nz, along with information about special voting.

Meet the candidates meetings have been organised by the Rakaia Community Association at 7.30pm on Thursday 22 September at the Rakaia Memorial Hall, and by Greypower at the Ashburton Seniors Centre on Monday 19 September, at 2pm.

Once voting starts, daily vote returns will be available from electionz.com. Preliminary results are expected somewhere around 1pm on 8 October.

The first meeting of the inaugural Council has been tentatively scheduled for Thursday 27 October, at 1.30pm, when councillors and Methven Community Board members will be sworn in.

Some public toilets to be locked at night

Council has begun closing some of its public toilets at night in an attempt to deter vandals that have been targeting facilities.

About twice a week over the past several months, staff cleaning the public toilets at Argyle Park and East Street have arrived to find graffiti on the walls of toilet cubicles, or soap dispensers ripped from their fittings and toilet paper strewn about.

A fire was deliberately lit in one cubicle at the Ashburton Domain playground.

Community Services Group Manager Steve Fabish said public toilets at Argyle Park, the Walnut Avenue sports pavilion, Ashburton Domain picnic ground and children's playground were now being closed at night by Council's security contractor. The toilets are unlocked again in the morning.

"The only public toilets open as usual are the ones near the domain entrance, which are well used by the travelling public, the



The East Street disabled access toilet will continue to be open during the night.

East Street disabled access toilet and a toilet block at the Ashburton cemetery.

"It's a shame it has come to this, but we are working with police on ways to stop this repeated vandalism and locking some toilets overnight removes an opportunity to cause damage."

He said the recent spate of vandalism to the public toilets was concerning.

"Residents end up paying for vandalism through their rates, so we have been forced to take what we hope is a temporary measure to close some of our public toilets at night.

"Sadly, many other councils around the country have been locking their public toilets at night because of vandalism. This is not the Ashburton way and we need your help.

"So we are asking residents to keep an eye out and report this sort of behaviour to the police if they see it happening."

Mr Fabish said Council had security cameras in various locations and were supplying footage to police.

"These cameras don't always capture the people doing the damage, so we are asking the community to help be our eyes and ears."

If you see our public toilets being vandalised, please call police on 105.

Rebates team hits the road

Our Customer Services team is heading to Methven and Rakaia early next month to talk rates rebates.

Council staff will be at the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall on Wednesday 5 October, from 10am until 12 noon; and at the Rakaia Library on Wednesday 12 October, from 10am until 12 noon. Residents can call Council on 307 7700 to book at appointment at Methven or Rakaia.

Many low income households are eligible for increased support to pay their council rates, especially with changes to the rates rebate scheme that took effect in July. The maximum annual rebate has increased from \$665 to \$700 and the abatement threshold has increased from \$26,510 to \$28,080 income.

Bringing te reo Māori to life

Te wiki o te reo Maori is a good time to revisit the two Māori names, gifted by Arowhenua, for the Council's new library and civic building. The library will be known as Te Pātaka o kā Tuhituhi and the civic centre as Te Waharoa a Hine Paaka.

Te Pātaka o kā Tuhituhi means the storehouse of written publications, while Te Waharoa a Hine Paaka derives from an ancient matai tree that once stood at Alford Forest. Known as Hine Paaka, the tree was a significant landmark to Māori travelling through the district.

Council is also encouraging members of its communities to download a te reo Māori app designed for its staff so that more people can learn more about local Maori language and protocols during Māori language week.

The Tūwhana app came about after Council



piloted a te reo Māori course for staff in 2019 to improve cultural competency. The app also features Tagalog (the primary language of the Philippines) and Samoan.

It is available free on both Apple and Android play stores.

PUBLIC NOTICES

KEEP NEW ZEALAND BEAUTIFUL

Litter-Free Ashburton is looking for volunteers to help this Saturday as part of Keep New Zealand Beautiful Week. The group is planning clean-ups at some local hot-spots and is looking for helpers between 10am and 1pm. Volunteers should meet at the West Street carpark at 9.45am on Saturday 17 September. Rubbish bags and disposable gloves provided.

RUBBISH AND RECYCLING

KERBSIDE CALENDAR, BIN IT RIGHT BOOKLET

Need a note on your fridge to remind you whether it's glass or recycling day? Or some tips about how to reduce waste?

We've reprinted our Bin it Right booklet, which has everything you need to know about our solid waste and recycling programme. Call in to our Council office on Baring Square West and pick up a free booklet and/or a kerbside collection calendar.



COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

Council Meeting - Wednesday 21 September, 1.00pm (live-streamed)

Council Activity Briefings - Wednesday 28 September, 9.30am

Audit & Risk Committee - Wednesday 28 September, 1.30pm (live-streamed)

Council Hearings (Stormwater Bylaw) - Thursday 29 September, 9.00am (live-streamed)

DON'T GO STRAPLESS!

Remember to put your windstrap on whenever you put your wheelie bins out, no matter the weather! The strap helps keep lids shut on windy days, and when bins are blown or knocked over. They're specially designed to be undone as the bin is picked up and emptied.

Haven't got a windstrap? Go to our website ashburtondc.govt.nz/services/rubbish-and-recycling and request one.



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