

New sewer caters for growth

Wastewater has begun to flow in Council's new 1.45km trunk main that takes Ashburton's sewerage and dirty household water to the Wilkins Road treatment plant.

The trunk main is part of a \$2.33 million project that is the final phase of a big upgrade of the town's wastewater network.

Infrastructure and Open Spaces Group Manager Neil McCann said the new 800mm diameter trunk main replaces the old 600mm diameter pipeline, and is designed to cope with urban growth in the future.

"The project also involved replacing an ageing structure at Trevors Road known as a grit chamber, which caught stones and other non-biodegradable objects in the system."

The open-top concrete grit chamber was installed in the 1940s to collect sewerage from the town, and direct it to Milton Road and then under the Ashburton River to the Wilkins Road treatment plant.

Mr McCann said the new, larger trunk main no longer crosses private property on its way to Milton Road, and he was pleased to see it come online last week.

"It hooks up with the upgraded river crossing and the new additional relief



The old concrete grit chamber has been decommissioned and demolished.

sewer, both big projects completed in the past couple of years. The town's original network of sewer pipes dates back to the 1920s and while we still have a few earthenware pipes we are systematically replacing the old with the new."

Two old concrete wastewater tanks near the old grit chamber will also be removed eventually. Back in the 1950s, the tanks were used for the primary treatment of raw sewerage by separating solids from liquids.

Mr McCann said wastewater treatment had come a long way since then, and was heavily monitored to protect both people and the environment.

"The new trunk main is made of special plastic and there are seven manhole points along it.

"Ashburton has nearly 9200 wastewater connections and all the wastewater is collected at the Wilkins Road oxidation ponds, treated and then piped to Ocean Farm, where it is sprayed onto farmland near the coast.

"While ACL manages the day-to-day operations, it is Council's responsibility to ensure the whole scheme runs safely and effectively."

ACL was also the contractor for the grit chamber project.

Learning festival offers hands-on fun

Ashburton Library and Keep Learning Mid Canterbury are teaming up to host a Lifelong Learning Festival in September.

The festival, from 4pm-7pm on Tuesday 9 September, is about showcasing the wide range of learning opportunities in the district for adults of all ages, and to inspire people to try something new through fun

and hands-on experiences.

The event is part of Adult Learners' Week (the Festival of Adult Learning Ahurei Ākonga), which runs from 8-14 September.

Organisers are hoping to have tertiary, trades, adult and community education groups, as well as informal learning through clubs or workplaces.

So if you looking to upskill for work, explore a new career, or pick up a hobby or some new life skills, then come along!

Those wanting to learn and those wanting to promote learning are encouraged to register their interest so organisers can confirm the programme and order sausages for a barbecue to be manned by the Lions.

CE Hamish Riach Smile, it's candidate camera

Candidates for seats on Council are beginning to emerge, with just two weeks until the nomination period closes.

If you want to keep an eye on who is standing for all the different roles in this year's local elections, then head to voteashburton.nz to find a current candidate list.

To help you get to know candidates better, Council will be providing all those standing the chance to record a 90-second video answering some set questions. The video will be available on voteashburton.nz alongside the candidates' election information.

Recording conditions will be the same for all candidates, to ensure the opportunity is fair, and candidates will be invited to take part after the nomination period closes.

Council is also looking at other events for voters to see candidates in action, including meet-the-candidates evenings in Ashburton and Methven. We hope to have more details on those soon.

If you are thinking about standing for Council, the Mayoralty, the Methven Community Board, Environment Canterbury or the Braided Rivers Community Trust, then all the information you need about

campaigning and the nomination process can also be found at voteashburton.nz.

Events at Council facilities over the school holidays have been drawing a younger crowd, and that has also been great to see.

Our What's On Guide was again a big hit, with nearly 500 downloads from Council's website, and 500 printed copies made available. The Matariki Escape Room was definitely a favourite, but there was plenty of fun happening across many activities and venues.

Well done parents, and organisers!



SHORT AND SWEET

RAIL FOOTBRIDGE

Council expects the historic rail footbridge to be out of action for about three weeks, after a car crashed into the western access. Temporary support is to be installed at one pier and it should then re-open to pedestrians.

FIX-IT FAIR

The Ashburton Library is running another Fix-It Fair on **Saturday 9 August**, and is looking for people who would like to volunteer their time and skills. All fixes at the fair are provided free of charge, so people can bring along jewellery, ceramics, shoes or clothes and learn how they can be repaired.

CREATIVE GRANTS

Are you involved in an arts show or project in the Ashburton District? You may qualify for financial help through the Creative Communities Scheme. Council administers the scheme on behalf of Creative New Zealand and applications open 1 August. You can find out how to apply and see the conditions on Council's website.

DRIVER REVIVER

The Ashburton Domain layby on West Street/State Highway 1 will be the site of an AMI Driver Reviver event on **Friday 18 July**, between 10am and 2pm. If you're driving past, stop in and grab a cuppa and snacks, and find out how to limit the effects of driver fatigue, which is a major cause of road crashes. Council is hosting this event with support from local businesses and organisations.

ARTIST TALK

Join the crew at the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum this Sunday for a talk by artist Nadia Curnow, who will discuss her exhibition Small Paintings Dedicated to Big Names. Nadia, from Timaru, draws inspiration through a range of artists, from the titans of modern art to the lesser knowns. She combines their artistic influences into unique paintings that blend abstract and figurative elements. Her talk is at 2pm on **Sunday 20 July**, and her exhibition runs until 3 August.

Building consents back on the rise

A rise in the value and number of building consents issued by Council in the past year has been led by new urban subdivisions and confidence in the local building sector.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2025 (Council’s financial year), 204 building consents were issued for new homes, up 25.9 per cent on the previous year.

Acting CE Neil McCann said the previous year had been quieter, but the increase was still greater than the 10-year average of 190 new home consents a year.

“Taking a long-term view, the district was growing steadily, then we experienced a covid-induced high and low, and now we are back on that steady growth track. We are also hearing a mostly positive commentary from the local building sector about work in progress or in the pipeline.”

Methven accounts for about a fifth of the new home consents. The consent data also showed a rise in the number of pole sheds being built, from 39 to 74.

The total value of the consented work was \$186.7 million, compared to \$142m the



previous year. The value of the new home consents was \$108m.

The total number of consents rose from 502 to 599, but is about a quarter less than the 10-year average because some types of building work no longer need consent.

“We’re receiving many enquiries from people looking to subdivide and also

hearing from existing businesses looking to grow or improve their footprint,” Mr McCann said.

“Council’s wider role is making sure we have the drinking water and wastewater networks to support development, and that land is appropriately zoned for future growth.”

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

Entry call for Zonta's annual art awards

The Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum and the Zonta Club of Ashburton are calling for entries to the annual Zonta Ashburton Women’s Art Awards and exhibition for 2026.

A major cash prize and solo exhibition will be awarded to the premier winner and all selected finalists will have their work shown in the awards exhibition at the gallery and museum.

The competition is open to all emerging and mid-career visual artists in Canterbury. The award seeks to raise the status of women artists and recognise their excellence in fine arts.

Gallery and Museum director Shirin Khosraviani said the awards were a great catalyst for motivating artists to create work and offer it up for critique and judging. “It never fails to impress.”



A Young Generation Award will also run for women artists between 16 and 20.

The 2026 event will be mark the awards’ 10th anniversary.

Entries close on 8 October, with the finalists announced in January. The winners will be revealed on 6 March, at the awards exhibition opening.

Stories from SS Ventnor

The Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum is preparing for an exhibition with a nautical and Chinese theme.

It will explore the story of the SS Ventnor, which left Westport in 1902 carrying the remains of nearly 500 Chinese goldminers being returned to their villages. The ship sank off Hokianga Harbour.

The exhibit opens on 2 August and that weekend two guest speakers will talk about their connections to the ship - Hannah King, whose family were founders of the Ng King Bros Chinese market garden settlement, and Keith Gordon, a diver and adventurer who explored the wreck of the Ventnor after it was discovered off the North Island coast in 2013.

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





RUN

BACK YOURSELF. RUN FOR COUNCIL.

There’s just two weeks left to stand in the local elections.

Interested? View our resources for candidates and grab a nomination form from the website.

voteashburton.nz



It's doggy rego time!

Register your four-legged friend before 31 July

ashburtondc.govt.nz/dogs



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)