

## Tree set for Christmas cheers

Santa might be smart to pack a coat on Saturday for Light up the Night in Ashburton's CBD, when the town's big Christmas tree will officially light up.

The tree was assembled earlier this week on the East Street Green, which will also host a stage for music and dance performances. Organisers are hoping for a clear day, but weather forecasters say there might be a few showers, so people should dress warmly.

The event will go ahead in light rain or drizzle, but if the weather is really wet, people should check [lightupthenight.co.nz](http://lightupthenight.co.nz) or Council's Facebook page for any cancellation notices.

The tree will be lit at 9.15pm but before then, people can get into the Christmas spirit by joining in for Christmas carols, and enjoying the entertainment. From 6pm, food trucks will also be offering a selection of delicious treats and a children's activity area will keep little hands busy making Christmas decorations.

Eco Educate will be onsite with a waste station encouraging people to recycle; you can bring your own clean container to hold food if you want.

Light up the Night is free and is the first of Council's two community Christmas events, with a family movie night planned for Saturday 9 December in the Ashburton Domain picnic ground.

To help spread the Christmas cheer further, one of our Light up the Night sponsors, Hokonui, will be collecting canned food on movie night, to donate to the Salvation Army's food bank.



## SHORT AND SWEET

### BUGS AND BITS

Council is hoping to see a flurry of last-minute submissions on its draft Biodiversity Strategy, before the deadline on Sunday. The draft strategy is about protecting and enhancing our natural environment, and what we can all do to make that happen. Submissions have been on the light side, but there's still time to share your hopes and vision for the environment. The easiest way to comment is online at [ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay).

### BUCKLE UP

Make it click and watch your speed: Council is this month working with Police and Waka Kotahi on a pilot programme targeting high risk driving behaviour in the Canterbury district, which includes our roads in Ashburton. For all November, police have been targeting seat belts and cellphones - the police message is simple, put your phone down, buckle up and drive distraction free.

### LIDS TO POSTS

Plastic lids being collected at the Ashburton Resource Recovery Park are being transported in bulk to Blenheim, where they are recycled into plastic farm posts. Plastic milk bottle and fizzy drink lids can't be put into kerbside recycling collections because the lids are too small for the sorting machines, but you can accumulate them at home and take them along to the recovery park on Range Street when you have a decent number. The company recycling the lids is called Future Post.

### CHRISTMAS SHUFFLE

A temporary change to kerbside rubbish and recycling collections is coming up: There is no kerbside collection on Christmas Day (Monday 25 December) so Council will collect everyone's wheelie bins one day later than normal that week. Monday's collection moves to Tuesday, and Tuesday's to Wednesday, and so on throughout the week; Friday's collection will take place on Saturday. Kerbside collection services are as normal from Monday 1 January, even though it is New Year's Day.

## Hamish Riach - Chief Executive How can Council best represent its community?



We're asking the community to be vocal over the next month about the make-up of Council – it's part of a Representation Review which is pretty important for everyone who lives in the district.

We want to know if people think the current wards are appropriate and if we have the right number of councillors, among other things. It's something we are required by law to do every six years and it's a good opportunity to check in with the community.

There's no need to change things if the community thinks they are well represented, and that's important feedback to give too.

The results of this early engagement will help us put together a formal consultation document that will be put to the community next year, but right now we're asking your views on a range of options.

Currently we have a mayor, and five councillors from the Ashburton ward and two councillors each from the

Eastern and Western Wards. One option that could be explored, if the community wanted, is combining the Eastern and Western Wards; there is even an option to have district wide voting, which means no wards at all.

The aim of the review is to make sure the make-up of Council suits this community, because we want residents to be engaged in local democracy.

Every vote counts in an election, as the recent general elections have shown, with one seat decided by just four votes after many thousands of votes had been counted. It is a reminder of how important voting is and how just a tiny number of votes can be the difference between success or not.

While I have not experienced a vote that close before in local elections, every vote is important and that is part of the context for some work in and around the future of local government at the moment.

A panel has been looking at what local government might look like in the

future and included in that is a whole range of issues, from funding from central government, to partnership with iwi/Maori in terms of Te Tiriti, and 16-year-olds voting.

Maybe in the future we could have a ward or mayoralty decided by just a handful of votes, and if 16-year-olds get to vote the difference could rest on the shoulders of a small number of new voters.

The easiest way to take part in our Representation Review is online, at [ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay) and you have until Sunday 17 December to tell us what you think.

Another important consultation closing this Sunday is on our draft Biodiversity Strategy, which is all about protecting and improving our natural environment. While there's been a lot of interest in the strategy, feedback has been on the light side and we've yet to see any big strategic or visionary submissions. It's not too late!

# Locals: Be vocal on representation

Council is asking for the community to be vocal about how they wish to be represented locally, ahead of the next local government elections in 2025.

The recently launched Representation Review includes topics such as the number of local councillors, wards, Māori representation and boundaries for the Methven Community Board.

Group Manager Engagement and Democracy Toni Durham said Council was required by law to review representation arrangements every six years, but it didn't necessarily mean things had to change if the current arrangements were working well.

"First we're going to do some early engagement that will identify any issues, and based on that community feedback there will be formal consultation in June or July next year.

"If we hear that people want to look at district wide voting, or a single urban and a single rural ward, then those might be options we formally consult on."

She said the early engagement document contained general questions about the current local election process in the Ashburton District and whether people felt they were adequately represented by Council.



**Vocal about Local asks residents how they feel about Council representation.**

"This will help us know whether we'll need to look further at any specific options for representation or it may tell us our community feels they are represented well, and we can retain our current arrangements for another six years."

The Ashburton District Council currently consists of a mayor and nine elected councillors. The district has an Ashburton ward with five councillors, and eastern and western wards with two councillors

each. A community board represents urban Methven.

Vocal about Local is Council's early engagement document and it is out now for feedback until Sunday 17 December.

The easiest way to provide your feedback is online at [ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay), paper forms are also available from the Council and Ashburton Public Library.

## Roads to close for Christmas events

Temporary road closures have been approved for Light up the Night this Saturday, and for the Santa parade on Saturday 2 December.

Objections and concerns about both events resulted in the road closure applications being decided by a hearing panel of Councillors last week and both were given the green light.

Light up the Night has moved to a Saturday this year and East Street will be closed between Havelock Street and Tancred Street, from 3pm until 10.30pm. Burnett Street will also be closed from East Street to Cass Street.

An East Street retailer had voiced concerns that some businesses would still be busy because of extended Black Friday trading, but still supported Light up the Night, which will conclude with the lighting of the giant Christmas tree at 9.15pm.



Councillors were told that pedestrians would still be able to access businesses that were open after 3pm in the road closure area, when food trucks and other preparations for Light up the Night were happening.

There will be dance performances and Christmas music on the night, centred on a stage alongside the Christmas tree.

A new route for the Santa parade, involving closing Walnut Avenue from State Highway 1 to Oak Grove from 10am-

2pm, was also approved. 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.

Two objectors were worried about how they would be able to access their properties on Walnut Avenue during the closure window.

Organiser Carol Johns told councillors that she would deliver traffic management plans to 100 households affected and put up signs two days before the event so that regular domain users would know not to park along the avenue on the morning of Saturday 2 December.

The parade will begin at Oak Grove and head east, doing a U-turn before the traffic lights and heading back to Oak Grove. Christmas-themed floats will later park in the domain, near a planned Christmas fete, so that people can admire the decorations and take photographs.

## Talk it Up Tuesdays: Four sessions left for 2023

There are four Talk it Up Tuesdays left for 2023, when Councillors are at the Ashburton Public Library for informal drop-in chats with residents.

The Talk it Up sessions started in August as a two-month trial and Councillors decided to keep them going as it was a good opportunity to share information and hear residents' complaints and compliments.

Residents can visit the library between 1pm and 2pm on 28 November and 5, 12 and 19 December to talk to two Councillors, who take turns fronting the sessions.

The first session of 2024 will be Tuesday 13 February, and it will be in the new library space at Te Whare Whakatere, the new administration and library building at Baring Square East.



### 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. **Night works for two weeks from 12 November.**

**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](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz)**

**Methven Community Board**, Monday 27 November, 10.30am at Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

**Ashburton Water Zone Committee**, Tuesday 28 November, 1pm

**Council Activity Briefings**, Wednesday 29 November, 9.30am

**Audit and Risk Committee**, Wednesday 29 November, 1pm

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

**Council Meeting**, Wednesday 6 December, 1pm

### 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 & ASHBURTON MUSEUM

327 West Street  
10am - 4pm daily