

Hardworking volunteers receive civic awards

From pickles that have helped fundraise \$46,000 for charity to delivering hundreds of meals to flood-affected families, the good and voluntary deeds of Ashburton people were highlighted this week at a special civic ceremony.

Community Honours Awards were presented to three people and two organisations, with one more to come. Patricia McLaren received the Mayor's Award for Public Service, Mid Canterbury Rural Women received an Ashburton Medal and Neroli Cross, Jim Henderson and KidzMethven each received a Civic Award.

Trevor Croy, not able to attend Monday's ceremony, will receive a Mayor's Award for Public Service at another time.

The Mayor's Award for Public Service is given to people who have made a significant and sustained contribution to the district, and Deputy Mayor Liz McMillan had the honour on Monday of recognising each of the recipients and congratulating them personally on what they had achieved.

"We are so lucky with the calibre of volunteers we have in this district and the six we are honouring certainly have made a difference in many peoples' lives," she said. "These wonderful people have gone above and beyond, and we thank them through these community awards."

The recipients, and family and friends, were hosted by the Deputy Mayor, several councillors and Council Chief Executive Hamish Riach at the Ashburton Event Centre. Their achievements were detailed in individual citations read at the award



Civic award recipients (from left) Marg Verrall of Mid Canterbury Rural Women, Neroli Cross, Patricia McLaren, Huia Campbell and John Corbett of KidzMethven, Deputy Mayor Liz McMillan and Jim Henderson. Absent was Trevor Croy.

ceremony.

The Mayor's Award for Public Service is the highest civic honour bestowed by Council and Mrs McLaren has given years of voluntary service to a host of organisations, including Red Cross and St John.

She is also widely known for making jams and preserves and selling them at the local farmers' market – over the years she has fundraised \$46,000 and given it to Ronald McDonald House, which helps support families who must travel to Christchurch for their child's medical treatment.

As a child, she was taught to make raspberry jam by her father and her home-

making skills have been well appreciated by her family and by the community. Mrs McLaren also knits for charity.

The Ashburton Medal honours the significant achievement or contribution of an individual or group and it went to Mid Canterbury Rural Women for their work during the floods of May 2021.

Their members collated and distributed food donations, prepared ready-cook meals and visited those suffering most in the aftermath of the floods.

Their efforts and kindness at such a stressful time made a big difference to those most affected.

The Civic Awards recognise substantial

service that benefits the district.

KidzMethven began as a group of Methven parents who set out to develop more outdoor play areas for the children of their town – they ended up building a skatepark that is now an attraction for young people and skateboarding tourists.

The skatepark was recently vested with Council as an asset to maintain.

Jim Henderson was recognised for his often behind-the-scenes work in rugby circles and as a civil defence volunteer.

Mr Henderson has devoted many voluntary hours to the Hampstead All Sports Club, from setting up the fields for rugby to washing the dishes in the bar at the end of the night. He has served as a coach, manager, referee and helped administer the sport at Mid Canterbury Rugby level.

In his civil defence role and when he was a trustee on the Pacific Island Community Trust, he provides guidance, governance and leadership along with his helping skills.

Neroli Cross currently gives her time and talents to 10 organisations in Mid Canterbury and a common theme in her volunteering is communication. Amongst her many roles she is a caring caller for St John and provides regular and friendly conversation over the phone to her client.

In another role, she reads the local news from a newspaper over the phone so it can be recorded and listened to by members of Blind Low Vision NZ. She also helps Hospice Mid Canterbury, Neighbourhood Support, Mid Canterbury Plunket, Timebank and is a reader/writer for students with learning difficulties.

Stuart Wilson, Councillor End of a rewarding journey

After four terms, 12 years, I have decided to retire from Council.

It is not an easy decision to make. From being involved in all the decisions council makes, to being on the sidelines and reading on the internet or the newspaper which direction the Ashburton District Council is taking, is going to be a real change.

I have full confidence the citizens of the district will elect councillors who will have the best interests of everyone at heart.

When I was first elected in 2010, Councillors like Robin Kilworth and John Leadley, both with years of experience, were very important in guiding decisions that were in the best interests of the district. To have served on other organisations before becoming a councillor is a great asset.

New councillors like me came with

lots of enthusiasm and full of ideas, which is wonderful, but to operate successfully we need a mixture of new and experienced people to maintain continuity, which has been a hallmark of the Ashburton District Council.

When contemplating standing for council, candidates must realise that if they are going to make an impression on how the district operates, it will be a full commitment both in time and effort.

A full council meeting every two weeks is the tip of the iceberg, there are numerous workshops on subjects to help us look at all the options before us. When wanting submissions on the various policies we put out for comments, there is reading of between 100 and 400 pages of submissions from the public.

I don't want to make it sound too daunting, but being a councillor



demands a change of lifestyle; if you are to be really involved you are always viewed in public as a councillor.

The district council is fortunate to have a very competent CEO and staff, and as councillors we get to know how much effort they put in for our district's wellbeing.

Being a member of the team is a wonderful experience. With a great mayor and a group of fellow councillors who become both colleagues and friends, we all look forward to attending meetings to debate and discuss the future of the district.

I thank the citizens of the district for giving me the opportunity to have had the privilege of being a district councillor.

July is time to register your dogs

The owners of some 7000 dogs living in the Ashburton District should receive a letter in the mail this week about re-registering their dog during the month of July.

The law requires all dogs over three months to be registered and owners who don't register their dog can be fined.

The letter will contain a brochure about your responsibilities as a dog owner and details about how to re-register your pet or working dog.

Most dog owners choose to do this online, but people can also bring their completed registration forms to Council's front counter to be processed.

This year's tags are green, and you'll find it easier to bend the plastic tag if you soak it in hot water before fixing it to your dog's collar.

Mystery shoppers rate frontline team No1

Council's front of house team has claimed top spot in the country for local government customer services.

Chief Executive Hamish Riach accepted the ALGIM (Association of Local Government Information Management) Supreme Award for the Best Customer Experience on behalf of Customer Services Manager Amanda Watson and her customer services and library support team recently.

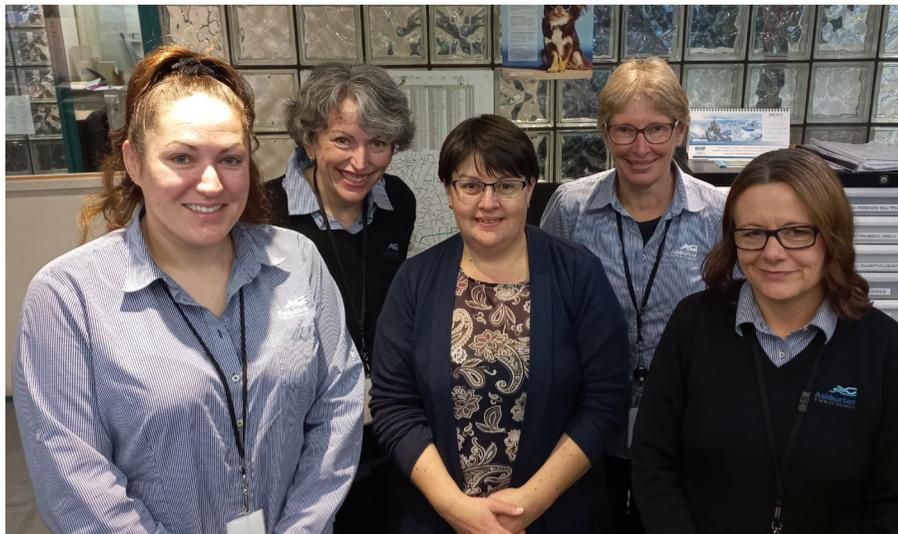
The award is based on mystery shopper calls that come by telephone, email and social media. Councils are rated then ranked on how they handle those calls.

"Our team has always done well, previously ranking sixth in New Zealand, but to be number one against every other council in New Zealand is an incredible achievement," Mr Riach said.

"What I find special about this award is that it's not based on a polished application or flashy project, but instead recognises great people doing their everyday job extremely well."

Runner-up in the customer experience mystery shop was Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

ALGIM does a mystery shop on all councils annually and the results guide organisations on where they can improve. Questions are varied, and can be about rates, Land Information Memorandums or dog registration; frontline staff are rated on



Council's customer services team is the best in local government.

their knowledge, courtesy and willingness to help.

The mystery shop involves multiple phone calls between the hours of 8am-5pm, on weekdays. Each council is asked a standard question and an assessment is made of the customer experience received.

It also involves inquiries made through council's website and Facebook page, and an assessment is made of the response received and time taken to reply.

Mr Riach said it was great to see the Ashburton District Council shining

amongst its peers at the annual ALGIM Awards.

"The use of technology and best practices in local government is continually expanding and being shared, and we are always striving to provide our community the best service possible."

He said the result was also impressive because some of the inquiries were made when Council's customer services team was working from home while on lockdown, and embedding a new phone system. The period also included the May floods in 2021.

Civil Defence: What's in a grab bag?



The grab bag of Jim Henderson, ADC's Emergency Management Officer.

Emergency survival items and get away kits (or grab bags) can be life-savers.

If your home is structurally sound after an emergency event, that is the best place for you to be. However, in an event where people's safety in their home is affected, they may opt to evacuate or may be instructed to evacuate by emergency services.

You might find yourself having to live out of your "grab bag" for 3-5 days until emergency services are able to get to you to provide aid.

A grab bag is an emergency get away kit with a few basic requirements to allow you

to get away from home quickly. The grab bag should be ready to go in a cupboard so that you are not running around trying to remember what to take or where everything is.

Suggested items are:

- cell phone and charger
- torch, water bottle, muesli bars
- small first aid kit and transistor radio
- warm clothing (jacket and hat)
- important documents (like insurance or ID) and prescription medicine
- baby's needs (if required), pets' needs (pets are your responsibility)

Before you leave and if it is safe to do so, turn off water and power.

Our special wetlands to feature in movie

The Ashburton Lakes and Wakanui will feature in a special film about wetlands being screened at the Regent Cinema in Ashburton on Saturday 25 June during Matariki weekend.

Rohe Koreporepo, the swamp the sacred place, tells inspirational stories of loss and recovery of wetland habitats, and following the film will be a short forum where producer Kathleen Gallagher and others involved will discuss the benefits of wetlands and managing their restoration.

The Ashburton Community Conservation Trust supported the production of the film by applying for and receiving a grant from



the Ashburton District Council biodiversity fund.

Making the film, Kathleen Gallagher visited wetland sites and spoke to 60 kaitiaki guardians around the country. These included O Tu Wharekai Ashburton Lakes and Wakanui Ashburton Hakatere.

She interviewed local people including the late kaumatua John Wilkie, who was filmed at Wakanui; Kerry Harmer from Castle Ridge Station, who farms alongside the Maori Lakes and Lake Emily; and Peter Howden and Edith Smith as conservationists.

Also featured locally is Di Lucas, who was chair of the Nature Heritage Fund, which played an influential role in the purchase of and establishment of the Hakatere Conservation Park.

The film on Saturday starts at 4pm and seats can be booked by phoning the cinema on 307 1230. Tickets are \$17, or \$12 for seniors, community card holders and 5-13 year olds.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are at Council Chambers, 137 Havelock Street, unless specified

Council meeting, Wednesday 29 June, 1pm (live-streamed)

Submission hearings: Waste Management and Minimisation Plan, and Trading in Public Places Bylaw, Wednesday 6 July, 9am (live-streamed)

Methven Community Board, Monday 25 July, 10.30am, at Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Ashburton Water Zone Committee, Tuesday 26 July, 1pm (live-streamed)

Council meeting, Wednesday 27 July 1pm (live-streamed)

MATARIKI SERVICES

RUBBISH AND RECYCLING

There will be no change to kerbside rubbish and recycling collections on Matariki, Friday 24 June. Please put your bins out as normal if Friday is your collection day.

The Ashburton Resource Recovery Park will be open on Friday 24 June, 8am-5pm; Saturday and Sunday 9am-5pm.

The Rakaia Resource Recovery Park will be closed on Friday 24 June.

ASHBURTON LIBRARY

The library will be closed on Friday 24 June, and open Saturday 10am-1pm, and Sunday 1pm-4pm.

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM

The heritage centre will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10am-4pm.

EA NETWORKS CENTRE

The facility will be open Friday 10am-5pm, Saturday and Sunday 7am-7pm (pools close 5pm, gym 6pm).

COUNCIL OFFICES

The Baring Square administration building will be closed Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The afterhours service will operate on 03 3077700, or issues can be reported on Send Snap Solve.

ROAD CLOSURE

WITHELLS ROAD

A short section of Withells Road from State Highway 1 to Maronan Ealing Road will be closed for a week from Monday 27 June so contractors can repair damage to the road caused by heavy vehicles turning.

The closure effectively means there is no access to Withells Road from the highway and detours will be in place. Traffic only using the highway will not be affected. Drivers needing to use the detour will be directed to State Highway 79, the inland route and Hinds Arundel Road.

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