

Market gardens now heritage park

Mid Canterbury people are being invited to check out the new Ng King community heritage park, after a colourful celebration opening event at the weekend.

The park is the site of former Chinese market gardens started by the Ng King brothers in 1921 and remnants of the settlement were declared a heritage site in 2019. About 300 people, all connected to the former market gardens, attended the opening.

Invited guests included descendants of the Chinese families that ran the gardens until 1964, Heritage New Zealand officials and Ashburton District Council councillors and staff.

Deputy mayor Liz McMillan said Council had been working with the families over the past 16 years to find a way to preserve and restore the site.

“This has been a special heritage project for us all, and we’ve all learned a lot about how those Chinese families worked and established themselves in our district.

“They overcame many challenges and became part of the social and business fabric of Ashburton and the wider district.”

The heritage park on Allens Road, in Ashburton, includes the remnant buildings of the market gardens, a pig oven and surrounding grass spaces; a path winds through the area and connects to Hanrahan Street. Interpretive panels tell the story of the settlers.



The opening on Sunday included performances from the Qiao Yi Hong De Lion dance team, and the ribbon was cut by the oldest family descendant Arthur King.

Family members shared stories about life at the market gardens and how produce was once delivered around the district by horse and cart.

The group then moved to the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum to see a new exhibition about the settlement and restoration. The exhibition will run until 12 May.

To celebrate the work, A New Era: Ng King

Bros. Chinese Market Garden Settlement, the museum is also inviting people to a talk with heritage consultant Arlene Baird. She has been involved with the site since 2014, liaising with Council, Heritage New Zealand, the Ng King descendants and project managing the stabilisation of the buildings and refurbishment of the site.

The talk will take place on Sunday 17 March at 2pm; it is free and open to the public.

A full landscaping plan has been prepared for the 2.3 hectare site, with more pathways, planting and seating planned, and Council will continue to look after the site.

CE - Hamish Riach Celebrating business and our diverse beginnings

It was a pleasure to attend two events last weekend that celebrated the wonderful people of the Ashburton district.

One of those events was the ANZ Business of the Year Awards, held in the Ashburton Aviation Museum’s superhangar with close to 350 people in attendance.

The awards are held every two years and are run by Council’s Economic Development team, with the help of event managers Ri Ra. The range of local businesses and their achievements, and the talent and passion of the people who run them was outstanding and inspiring.

The event had great support from entrants (a short list of finalists was created from more than 100 entries), and from businesses that sponsored the different categories or gave support in other ways.

As local government, we are legislated with the task of improving the economic wellbeing of our community – in the present and for the future. A strong and sustainable economy offers better job opportunities and higher wages, and attracts more investment to the district.

Last weekend’s awards celebrated businesses that were relatively new, like the supreme winner Ōpuke Thermal Pools and Spa, and businesses that have served the district consistently well over decades, like RX Plastics. Listening to those who won awards reinforced the drive and sheer hard work needed to get ahead, stay ahead and succeed.

While agriculture is the backbone of our local economy, it was also clear we have eggs in many other baskets, including manufacturing, construction, tourism and retail.

The opening of the Ng King community heritage park was also an occasion to

celebrate and I hope residents will take the chance to stop by at Allens Road and check out the work that has been done here.

Council was approached back in 2008 by the late Yep Ng, who was looking for help to preserve and restore the former market gardens site. It took years to get in touch with all the descendants of the Chinese market gardeners who settled in Ashburton and worked on the site from 1921 to 1964; agreeing to the future care of the site and surrounding open space is Council’s commitment that their legacy is not lost.

Moving from China to New Zealand 100 years ago would have had many challenges, but like all migrants they were looking for a new start and a new way of living. Their journey to Mid Canterbury will be forever part of our landscape.



SHORT AND SWEET

HERITAGE FUND

The deadline for applications for grants from Council’s heritage fund has been extended to the end of March. If you or your group has a project that promotes the preservation and/or restoration of heritage buildings and items, then you may be eligible for a community grant. The maximum grant available is \$10,000. Check out all the info at ashburtondc.govt.nz/grants.

MATARIKI VIEW

The Matariki viewing platform at Rakaia Gorge will be officially opened on Tuesday 5 March. The platform has views over the river, Southern Alps and Canterbury Plains and was built at the same time as new Council’s public toilets in the nearby carpark. The observation deck will have information panels, helping people pick out the Matariki star cluster. Students from Ashburton College provided artwork for the signage.

DISC GOLF SUCCESS

A tournament at the new Tinwald Domain disc golf course last weekend attracted 60 players from all over the South Island. Three local players were amongst the division champions: Janine Frost, Sam Hall and Amanda Hooper. Five temporary holes were added for the day, which players competing over three rounds.



TALK IT UP TUESDAYS

Every Tuesday: 1pm - 2pm
Ashburton Library
No booking required.

Grants help bring dreams to life

Students moving around Mt Hutt College see a colourful reminder every day about nature in their back yard, thanks to a Creative Communities grant.



A group of their peers designed and installed a 3.2m x 2.4m mural that is fixed to the side wall of the school hall and it reflects the local flora, fauna and culture of Methven.

The 10 volunteer students on the mural committee were led by local artist Karen Smith and spent one afternoon a week for two terms working out ideas and concepts. The final design was then digitally printed and installed last year on the hall entrance.

A \$6500 grant from the Creative Communities Scheme helped cover the cost of paint, equipment, planning and design of the mural, which was called Noho kei raro – Living under Ōpuke.

Teacher Kirsty Saxon said the financial support was much appreciated and

allowed the students to bring the mural to life, for the pleasure of the whole community.

Council administers applications to the Creative Communities Scheme and the next funding round runs throughout March; sports teams can also apply for money from the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund during March.

Democracy and Engagement Group Manager Toni Durham said Council administered applications for both

schemes and distributed money annually.

“We have a Creative Communities committee that decides applications and in the past they have helped fund some great projects.

“Last year they granted Base Youth Centre \$2000 to run a workshop for at-risk youth and the facilitator used spray paint and rap music to engage this group in art. The end result was a great piece of street art on the wall of the youth centre’s courtyard.

“The Ashburton Society of Performing Arts was also granted \$2000 to run a festival of the spoken word and musical theatre competition, and the money helped them hire a suitable venue with a stage and sound equipment.”

She said groups involved in any of the different forms of the arts should check out the grant criteria on Council’s website and apply during the month of March.

Grants and funding information can be found at ashburtondc.govt.nz/grants.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at Hine Paaka (Council Chambers), 2 Baring Square East, unless specified. Meeting agendas are online at ashburtondc.govt.nz

Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee, Tuesday 5 March, 9.30am, Wakanui Room

Council meeting, Wednesday 6 March, 1pm (live-streamed)

Methven Community Board, Monday 11 March, 9am, Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Council meeting, Wednesday 20 March, 1pm (live-streamed)

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

WORKS NOTICES

Tinwald viaduct/SH1 Tinwald Corridor Improvements - Contractors working on this traffic lights project for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi have been granted an extension for traffic management on the highway and side roads until 30 April. The viaduct is currently closed.

Seafield Road - Work is planned for Seafield Road, between Christys Road and Stanley Road, from 12 February to 19 May. Traffic management will be in place and will include detours from 4 March.

Thompsons Track - Closed between Braemar and Pole Roads until 15 March for road rehabilitation. Detours in place.

Full closure details on our website ashburtondc.govt.nz

PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a proposal to temporarily close roads to ordinary vehicle traffic to enable the holding of the **Ashburton Car Club's Street Sprints**.

Roads proposed to be closed:

- **Smallbone Drive, from River Terrace to Robinson Street**
- **Robinson Street, from Smallbone Drive to McNally Street**
- **Watson Street, from Range Street to Robinson Street**
- **McNally Street, from Range Street to Robinson Street**

Period of closure: **From 7pm on Friday 26 April 2024 to 8pm on Sunday, 28 April 2024.**

Additional closure: **Range Street will be closed on Saturday 27 April from 6pm to Sunday 28 April 6.30am only.**

This proposed closure is made under the Local Government Act 1974 – Schedule 10 (11 (e) and will be considered at the Council meeting on **Wednesday 20 March 2024**. Any person objecting to the proposal should lodge a notice of their objection and grounds for their objection in writing by post or email to the Council, 5 Baring Square West, Ashburton by 4pm, **Friday 15 March 2024**.

NEIL McCANN
Group Manager Infrastructure and Open Spaces

BOYA boost

Ōpuke Thermal Pools and Spa was crowned supreme winner at the ANZ Business of the Year Awards 2024, a celebration of the Ashburton District's business community.

Winners were celebrated at a gala dinner hosted in the Ashburton Aviation Museum's superhangar, and Deputy Mayor Liz McMillan handed out the main award.

The awards were organised by Council and Ri Ra Events. Full results are online businessoftheyear.nz



Pool preview kicks off LTP sessions

A drop-in session at the Tinwald Pool is planned for early April as part of wide-ranging consultation about Council’s Long Term Plan.

The pool was closed this summer because of plant failure, leaks and lifeguard shortages, and an estimated \$3 million refurbishment is one of five possible options proposed in the Long Term Plan, which will be out for community feedback on 27 March.

Group Manager Democracy and Engagement Toni Durham said the drop-in session at Tinwald Pool was a chance for people to ask questions about the pool and the alternative options on offer.

“We’ll have a barbecue running at the Tinwald Pool, and Councillors and staff will be walking groups through the pool facility, explaining what needs to be repaired to bring it up to scratch. People can have a really good look and ask questions.”

A range of informal pop-up events and barbecues are planned as part of a month-



long consultation programme, which also includes traditional public meetings for Ashburton, Mt Somers, Methven and Rakaia, where Councillors will talk about the draft Long Term Plan and proposed average rate rise of 9.9 per cent for 2024-25. A stockwater focused meeting will be held at Hinds.

Council has five key decisions it is looking for feedback on, though people can make submissions on any part of the plan.

Mrs Durham said Council was looking for the community's thoughts on a greenwaste collection, more indoor courts for EA Networks Centre, and the future of Balmoral Hall and the old Polytech land, and stockwater.

“It’s important that we engage with as many people as possible, so we’ve been in touch with community groups like Greypower and service clubs to see if we can present at their meetings. We’ve reached out to groups across the district and the calendar is starting to fill up, but if your group or organisation would like a visit, let us know.

“We’re also heading to secondary schools to talk with senior students as they will form the next generation of ratepayers and we want to make sure we hear from them.

“Another feature of this Long Term Plan is how we are gathering feedback. People will be able to make submissions on our paper consultation documents as in the past, but for the first time we are using an online platform called Social Pinpoint which will make it easier for people to give feedback, ask questions and generally access more information.”

Details of Council’s draft Long Term Plan and how to give feedback will be at itsourplace.nz from late March.

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 6am-9pm (pools 7pm, gym 8pm)
Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 5pm, gym 6pm)

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

327 West Street
10am-4pm daily (late night Wed)