

SAFE COMMUNITIES ASHBURTON DISTRICT: BUSINESS PLAN, 2024-2027:

SIX MONTH REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY TO 31ST DECEMBER, 2025



*Keeping ourselves, our families and
our communities safe*

Introduction and Comments:

The Safe Communities Ashburton Programme has been funded by the Ashburton District Council (and ACC for its first 5 years of operation) since its accreditation as a Safe Community in 2019.

The Programme's vision is *"Ashburton District, our place, a safe place to live, work and play, free from preventable injury and harm."*

The Safe Communities Steering Group has been chaired by Deputy Mayor, Liz McMillan since its inception, and works to a Business Plan (2024-2027) to address the key priority areas identified for Ashburton District. We thank Liz for her huge input and now welcome Councillor Julie Moffett to this role commencing in 2026.

Research, data analysis, and community consultation ahead of developing the Business Plan told us that for our District falls in older people, leading to both fatal and non-fatal injury, family harm, road crashes and theft/burglary were of particular concern. Since then, community safety issues such as scams awareness have also been added to the work of the Programme.

When setting priorities, the Safe Communities Programme considers other existing networks already addressing some of the identified safety concerns (for example, the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee, the Suicide Prevention Programme and the Family Violence Network).

Funding allows for a part-time Co-ordinator to work with the Steering Group and other interested agencies on a variety of safety projects.

While the Safe Communities Programme is small in terms of funding, it aims to make an impact on local community awareness about key safety concerns by agencies working collaboratively, pooling resources, and giving the same messages. The local focus also allows for new safety issues of concern to be addressed as they arise, for example scams awareness and the outcomes of the Age Friendly Ashburton research.

The Programme also operates as a vehicle for attracting more funding into the District for safety projects from national and local funding organisations, with additional funding of \$161,000 towards the Bike Skills Park and the Connector community transport programme confirmed over this period.

What is a "safe community"?

- A safe community is a place that is attractive to live in, work in and visit. A safe community is a livable community, where people can go about their daily activities in an environment without fear, risk of harm or injury. Homes, roads, public spaces and the workplace are safe for everyone to enjoy

- Community safety is not only about reducing and preventing injury and violence. It is about building strong, cohesive, and vibrant communities, where people take pride in their community and are aware of community safety and how to look after themselves and others. The ability to access quality, up-to-date information is key to achieve this
- A safe community encourages people and families to move to the district and stay, contributing to the social, cultural and economic richness of the District
- Community safety is important to the people of Ashburton District – satisfaction with Council’s role in helping keep the community safe has been consistently high since 2017 (88% - 2024/25 Residents Survey)
- Most community-based injuries and accidents are preventable and predictable (for example, falls in the home)

Collaboration is the Key to Better Reach and Impact

When the Programme commenced in 2019 there were 27 signatory agencies. Today many of these agencies are still actively participating in projects and we have been joined by a number of others, who have seen the value of collaborating and sharing information and resources.

Around 20 agencies worked together to improve safety in our community over this period. These collaborations are outlined in the 2024-2027 Business Plan and Achievements below:

Business Plan – 2024-2027

Safety Issue/Objective	Project(s)	Partners (L – lead)	Measure	Achievements 1 July to 31 st December, 2025
Reduce rural/social isolation – as Ashburton District has no public transport service, provide a community transport service to transport people from around the District into Ashburton Township	Mid Canterbury Connector community transport service Partnership with the Rakaia Community Association to utilise their community vehicle to	Mid Canterbury Community Vehicle Trust (L); ECAN; Rakaia Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of passengers transported • Kms travelled 	Passengers transported - 218 Kms travelled – 19,838

for medical/dental appointments, to see family and friends, shopping, etc	transport Rakaia and Methven residents into Ashburton Township	Association; Safe Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer driver hours • Other volunteer hours (trustees) 	<p>Vol driver hours – 509.35</p> <p>Other vol hours - 40</p> <hr/> <p>From July 2021 (when the service commenced) to 31st December, 2025, the service has made 1,147 trips into Ashburton Township from around the District and covered 116,950kms.</p> <p>Volunteer drivers have contributed 2,510 hours to the service and trustees have contributed 325 hours towards its governance.</p> <p>A successful grant of \$16,000 from the Lion Foundation enabled the Trust to purchase a newer, replacement vehicle for the Ashburton service.</p> <p>Funding of \$10,000 was also received from COGS towards operational expenses.</p> <p>3 new volunteer drivers were recruited and trained for the Ashburton service.</p>
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				<p>3 volunteer drivers undertook a first aid training course, organised by St John and funded by the Trevor Wilson Charitable Trust.</p> <p>Sadly, our founder volunteer driver, trustee and huge advocate for the service, Kevin Sisson, passed away on the 1st December. The Mid Canterbury Community Vehicle Trust and the Connector service will miss his wisdom and unflagging belief in the value of the service for socially isolated Ashburton residents. Mr Sisson has generously bequeathed the sum of \$20,000 to the Trust to be used for the future replacement of the service's vehicle.</p> <p>The Mid Canterbury Community Vehicle Trust held its AGM on the 18 November, with all trustees continuing for a further 12 months and one new trustee appointed.</p>
<p>Falls and fractures in older adults – like all districts across New Zealand, Ashburton has a high</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “April Falls” promotion <p>OR/</p>	<p>Safe Communities (L); Age Concern Ashburton; Presbyterian</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper feature pages in the Ashburton Courier promoting local 	<p>10 agencies collaborated to run a “Move Well, Age Well” falls prevention expo for older people at the EA Networks</p>

<p>number of falls related injuries in people aged over 65 years of age.</p> <p>This collaboration aims to prevent falls and fractures in older adults by promoting local strength and balance classes and Live Stronger for Longer/ACC messages and initiatives (eg NYMBL app)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October promotion supporting/celebrating International Day of Older Persons (1st October each year) 	<p>Support; Sport Canterbury; EA Networks Centre; Waitaha Health/Tangata Atumotu Trust; SpecSavers; ACADS; St John; Motus Physio; Mid Canty Connector community transport service</p>	<p>strength and balance classes (1 per annum)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls prevention expo run annually 	<p>Centre on the 1st October. Around 150 older people attended. The expo provided info on the causes of falls in older people, plus opportunities to have a go at approved Strength and Balance classes and other activities at the Centre including Aquacise and Pickleball.</p> <p>We have found our home at the EA Networks Centre and have plans to expand the expo's focus in 2026 to include home safety and wellbeing.</p>
<p>Age Friendly Ashburton Strategy and Plan – Ashburton District has a higher than national average population of people aged 65 years and over and an ageing population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Reference/Steering Group of agencies involved with older people Create an Age Friendly Plan for the district, which will enable a focus on identifying the strengths of Ashburton as a place where older adults feel fully part of the community and projects where improvements could be made The Plan will cover eight elements of community 	<p>Safe Communities (L); agencies, individuals and government departments involved with older people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Age Friendly Ashburton Strategy and Action Plan to be completed by 30 June, 2026 	<p>Funding of \$15,000 was secured from the Office for Seniors, Ministry of Social Development, to undertake a district-wide community needs assessment, asking residents 65 plus how "Age Friendly" they found Ashburton District to be.</p> <p>The findings will act as the basis for the development of an Age Friendly Ashburton Strategy and Action Plan by 30 June, 2026.</p> <p>A Steering Group of agencies which deal with older people provided assistance with promoting the survey and</p>

	<p>life – social participation; housing; diversity and culture; civic participation and employment; community support and health services; communications and information; outdoor spaces and buildings; and transportation</p>			<p>where necessary assisting older people to complete the questionnaire.</p> <p>The Group came together to hear the results in August.</p> <p>The first project for the Group is the compilation of a paper booklet on services and support for older people. This will be similar to the “Need Help” booklet produced by Safer Mid Canterbury and the CAB. Information will be collated by the CAB, working with a small group of agencies from the Steering Group to provide guidance and support.</p>
<p>Scams/fraud – a rising issue nationally and internationally, in particular, bank investment, phone, online purchase of goods and romance scams and the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to impersonate individuals</p>	<p>Awareness/education programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community talks • Update and reprint flyer on scams and distribute widely 	<p>Safe Communities (L); Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support; Citizens Advice Bureau; Ashburton Public Library/Te Whare Whakatere; SeniorNet Ashburton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 community talks per annum • Information flyer updated and widely circulated 	<p>A flyer on scams awareness, with information on which agencies to contact locally for advice and support if you think you have been scammed, was updated, reprinted and widely circulated.</p>

<p>Road Safety Awareness and Cycle/Scooter Skills – the Ashburton District Council’s Walking and Cycling Strategy identified the need for a safe, off-road space for children and adults to learn to ride safely and to learn about road safety and road rules. This is of particular importance in Ashburton Township, where children need to cross the main highway and railway tracks to get to school.</p>	<p>Establish a bike skills park on Ashburton Domain</p>	<p>Safe Communities (L); Sport Canterbury; Ashburton District Council; local service clubs; Tarbotton Land and Civil</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek funding for the detailed design and build of the facility • Construct the facility 	<p>A grant of \$115,000 towards the construction of the facility was received from the Lion Foundation, as well as a donation of \$20,000 from the combined Lions clubs of Ashburton. A funding application was also submitted to the Lottery Community Facilities Fund, which will be notified on the 18th February.</p> <p>On the 15th December a partnership between the Mid Canterbury Community Wellbeing and Safety Enhancement Trust and Tarbotton Land and Civil to sponsor and construct the Bike Skills Park was announced. Tarbotton Land and Civil will contribute substantial time, use of machinery and labour to the construction of the facility, as their contribution to this community project. The facility will be named the “Tarbotton RideSmart Park”.</p> <p>As well, the Trust and Working Group have been overwhelmed by the generosity of local suppliers wanting to be involved and contribute to the project. A sponsorship prospectus has</p>
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<p>Collaborate to promote safety messages</p>	<p>Ashburton Courier newspaper monthly column</p> <p>Facebook postings</p>		<p>Monthly column for safety messages from SCAD and Safe Communities Steering Group members</p> <p>Regular</p>	<p>Thanks to the Ashburton Courier newspaper for continuing to make this available to Safe Communities member agencies.</p> <p>The column continued to be popular, with a number of agencies utilising it to promote safety messages, events and activities.</p>