

SAFE COMMUNITIES ASHBURTON DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT:

1 JULY, 2021 – 30 JUNE, 2022



***Our Vision:** Ashburton District, our place, a safe place to live, work and play, free from preventable injury and harm*

What is a “Safe Community”?

The Safe Community model creates an infrastructure in local communities to increase action on injury prevention and safety promotion through **local collaborations**. Working together provides the opportunity to take a district-wide, strategic overview of community safety issues in the District and enables greater reach and a collective “weight” to respond to them.

Background

Ashburton District is “safe” but it can be safer. Analysis of district data, research and community consultation tells us that falls in older people, leading to both fatal and non-fatal injury; road crashes; theft and burglary and family harm are key safety concerns for Ashburton District. Key priority areas identified for Ashburton District are:

- Rural Safety/Social Isolation
- Falls in Older People
- Road Safety
- Alcohol, Drugs and Community Safety (early intervention/prevention)
- Harm Reduction/Prevention (e.g. theft/burglary)
- Social/Community Wellbeing

The Safe Communities Steering Group of 27 agencies is chaired by Deputy Mayor, Liz McMillan, and works to a Strategic Plan (2019-2024) and an annual Business Plan, to address the key priority areas identified for Ashburton District.

Working Groups are developed for projects, which agencies “self-select” to join if they have an interest. This also enables other agencies/interested parties which are not members of the Steering Group to join the Working Groups.

The Steering Group meets bi-monthly and receives reports from the Working Groups. A Safe Communities Co-ordinator is employed 20 hours per week to co-ordinate the Steering Group and to develop and co-ordinate projects.

The Steering Group recognises the work of other networks focussing on community safety (for example, the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee; the Family Violence Network) and works collaboratively with them.

Key Achievements: 1 July, 2021 – 30th June, 2022

Introductory remarks

2021-2022 has seen the roll out of the third year of the Safe Communities Ashburton District Strategic Plan (2019-2024).

The programme of activities in the Strategic Plan was impacted by Covid over the year, with reduced numbers of older people participating in falls prevention/strength and balance classes; people not wanting to go out impacting on planned Neighbourhood Support talks on theft/burglary; and people not wanting to travel, impacting on use of the Mid Canterbury Connector community transport service. The Child Unintentional Injury Project had to be put on hold and the Safety Village did not go ahead (for the second year) at the Ashburton A and P Show. In some projects, agency staff experienced illness and self-isolation (more than once) and in some cases were focussed on or reassigned to Covid-related activities, meaning planned collaborations could not go ahead.

However, a number of **new collaborations** have developed to address community safety concerns which have come to the attention of the Safe Communities Steering Group, including the needs of parents and parenting agencies; promoting community awareness of theft/burglary and scams/fraud; and cycle/scooter and motorcycle safety. And it has been particularly pleasing to develop a close working relationship over the year with Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support and Ashburton Police.

Project updates/information for individual projects:

- **Rural Safety/Isolation: “Mid Canterbury Connector” Community Transport Service**

This project aims to reduce rural and social isolation by looking at the need for a low cost community transport service, driven by volunteers, to bring people living in the more rural/remote areas of the District into Ashburton Township for medical appointments, doing business with Council, seeing friends and family, shopping etc.



During this period:

- After community consultation, the service moved in October, 2021, from operating only two fixed routes, two days a week, to an on-demand service, Monday to Friday between 9am and 4.30pm

- The service purchased its own vehicle
- The information flyer for the service was updated and distributed
- Funding was received from Environment Canterbury/NZTA and Lottery towards the operation/maintenance of the Connector vehicle
- The Mid Canterbury Community Trust held its first AGM on 23rd November. One trustee stood down, all other trustees committed to a further term, and two new trustees were elected
- Passenger numbers continue to be impacted by Covid-19, but there was increasing uptake, particularly from Methven residents
- Statistics for the period were:
 - Passengers transported – 45
 - Km travelled – 7031
 - Volunteer driver hours – 136
 - Other volunteer hours (trustees) - 57

- **Falls Prevention for Older People**

During this period:

- Post the July/August 2021 lockdown, attendance at Mid Canterbury strength and balance classes dropped from a total attendance of 59% (attendance versus capacity) to 41.9%
- The Falls Prevention Network therefore promoted getting out to classes under Level 2 via a feature page in the Ashburton Courier newspaper on the 4th November, 2021, including an article on a local lady gaining much benefit from attendance at classes at the EA Networks Centre
- Since then it has been difficult to progress this collaboration, as Covid has impacted on older people venturing out into the community to attend strength and balance classes. Also, the resignation/replacement of the Sport Canterbury Falls Prevention Advisor position has held up progress. Winter 2022 will be planning time for a Spring campaign to encourage older adults back into classes

- **Preventing Theft/Burglary**

Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support, Police and Safe Communities collaborated on a campaign over November/December, 2021 to make the community more aware of how to prevent theft/burglary from residential properties and vehicles, and theft of tools:

- A six-week information/awareness promotion was undertaken in the Ashburton Courier newspaper, focussing on different aspects of the campaign
- Three handouts were developed and widely distributed, with tips on keeping property, vehicles and tools safe
- A number of talks were provided to community groups by the Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support Co-ordinator and Police. The Neighbourhood Support Co-ordinator reports that over April, May and June, 2022 she did 7 talks around the District, with a total of 197 attendees, and gave out information on theft/burglary. Talks are ongoing
- Neighbourhood Support groups were provided with home marking kits to identify items of value in case of burglary – as at 30 June, 2022, 15 Neighbourhood Support groups had borrowed the kits for their members to use
- A partnership was established with the Ashburton Menzshed to provide a tools engraving service for tradies, to assist with easy identification and return if tools are stolen and recovered by the Police
- The campaign has been impacted by Covid, in particular community talks (with people not wanting to go out) and the tools engraving service

- **Scams/Fraud Awareness Campaign**

A new collaboration between Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support, Mid Canterbury CAB, Ashburton Public Library, Police, Digital Waitaha and Safe Communities, which arose from concern over the number of scams/fraud in the community, especially targeting older adults.

- Research and consultation was undertaken and a 6 -week awareness campaign developed for publication in the Ashburton Courier newspaper, starting in July, 2022. The campaign will cover phone scams, buying online scams, romance scams, phishing scams and information on local courses/sessions on digital safety provided by Digital Waitaha and the Ashburton Public Library
- During that time there will also be displays, community talks and information made available for pick up at the Library and from the CAB at Community House
- The emphasis of the campaign will be on encouraging people who think they have been scammed to seek help and report it, as often there is a degree of embarrassment about being the victim of a scam. Local sources of advice and assistance (Neighbourhood Support, CAB, Library, Digital Waitaha) will be promoted,

to make it easier for people to discuss what has happened and find out where to report it

- **Parenting:**
 - A collaboration with ACC, the Family Wellbeing/parenting programme (Safer Mid Canterbury) and Plunket was established to develop a **child unintentional injury awareness/education programme for parents/caregivers on dangers around the home and how to prevent them**, utilising the Safekids Aotearoa Toolkit and other resources. Unfortunately due to Covid, which meant community programmes such as Plunket all closed, and the need to recruit a new Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator at Safer Mid Canterbury, this project has not yet been able to commence
 - **A survey of parents/caregivers and parenting** agencies was carried out over November/December, 2021 as part of a collaboration between ACADS, Plunket, SEEDS (Safer Mid Canterbury), Community and Public Health and Safe Communities. The survey aimed to identify the positives of parenting in Ashburton District, as well as any gaps in services/support which might need to be addressed. 115 parents and 20 professionals responded to the survey. The research findings were presented and discussed by a number of parenting agencies on 1st June and plans are now underway to meet again to look at developing an Action Plan from the research recommendations
- **Road Safety - Motorcycle Safety** – Ashburton District Council, ACC and Safe Communities collaborated as part of Motorcycle Awareness Month in October, 2021 and promoted the Ride Forever programme in both local newspapers
- **Road Safety – Cycle/Scooter Safety** - Council, ACC and Police collaborated to develop a schools cycle/scooter safety promotion aimed at students 5-7, 8-10 and 11-13 years. Primary and intermediate schools were invited to take part in a helmet design competition (which must include a safety message/visual), with helmets as prizes. One school is trialling the competition pack over the Winter and schools will be invited to participate in the Spring
- **Caring for Communities Social/Community Recovery Group**
 - In June, 2020 the Safe Communities programme assumed co-ordination of this project, which had been established as the Ashburton District Council's Welfare Response Group during the lockdown
 - The Group formally ceased its function as a Covid-19 welfare response group in November, 2021
 - A review of the research undertaken for the Group, what has been achieved and any outstanding issues/focuses and how they could be addressed will be undertaken in July, 2022

- **Safety Village, Ashburton A and P Show 2021**— planning was undertaken for this event, but the Safety Village did not go ahead, as the Show was restricted to a non-spectator event due to Level 2 restrictions. Planning is now underway for the 2022 A and P Show
- **Safety Promotion** - The Ashburton Courier newspaper free, monthly Safe Communities column continued during this time, with spaces offered to Safe Communities member agencies. This has been a great way for community agencies to promote their safety messages and services and for the Safe Communities programme to be profiled in the local media. Social media (Facebook) has also been used to promote various activities over the year
- **Cessation of the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand** – the Foundation wound up in December, 2021 after 17 years of activity. A Transition Working Group of Safe Communities representatives is working through a process of identifying what Foundation roles and activities are valuable and need to be continued, and what other activities could add value to the Safe Communities network and to key stakeholders. It is expected that a new national entity will be developed to continue and expand upon the work of the Foundation
- **New 2022-2023 Projects were identified (refer Safe Communities Business Case and Business Plan, 1 July, 2022-30 June, 2023)**, following a planning session held by the Safe Communities Steering Group on 28th January, 2022, where crime/injury data and local and national safety issues and concerns were discussed.

Existing projects such as the Falls Prevention promotions were discussed as to their value and therefore re-inclusion in the 2022-23 Plan. New projects identified for further research and development include:

- Implementation of safety initiatives identified from the District Parenting Research
- A ski safety programme for schools in association with Mt Hutt ski field and ACC
- Contributing to the development of a feasibility study for a possible off road cycle skills/road safety track
- Promotion of national water safety messages in light of recent drowning statistics
- A collaboration with the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee, ACADS and ACC on a campaign on road crashes due to alcohol impairment, and focussing on 20-29 year olds

Concluding Remarks

Ashburton District has developed a robust coalition of government and community stakeholders, working across a range of sectors, under the Safe Community “umbrella”.

Working collaboratively and the sharing of skills, knowledge, resources, information, ideas and experience between local community safety agencies will increase community safety in Ashburton District over time. It also enables the group to be responsive to local and national safety issues and concerns as they emerge (for example national Summer drowning statistics).

Thanks to the Ashburton District Council and ACC for their support of this project.