

Councillors dial down rates rise

Rates are expected to rise an average 7.3 per cent over the Ashburton District for the 2025-26 financial year.

Mayor Neil Brown said councillors had spent a lot of time scrutinising Annual Plan budgets over a series of intense workshops and it was good to see a figure that was lower than first forecast.

“We know there are lots of financial challenges at the moment for everyone and council is not immune to inflation and insurance increases either, so to be able to get to 7.3 per cent when we initially signalled 10.1 is a solid outcome.”

The increase would affect properties differently depending on their capital value (and any change in the recent three-year revaluation), where they are located and the Council services received, and it translates to a \$135 rates increase for a \$870,000 Ashburton home and a \$759 increase for a \$9.3 million farm.

Council expects to collect about \$57.6m in rates, which it will use to run the district. It plans to call on \$4m from cash reserves and borrow for some big projects, including \$16 million for Three Waters projects.

After direction from councillors at a final workshop last week, staff will now begin finalising the draft Annual Plan, with the 7.3 per cent increase in rates. The final plan is on track to be adopted by Council before June.

Mayor Brown said the focus had been strictly on the efficient delivery of core work, like drinking water and roading, as well as some forward planning.

“We’ve increased the fixed drinking



Contractors at work installing a new sewer main between Trevors Road and Milton Road, to transfer Ashburton wastewater to the Wilkins Road treatment plant.

water charge for households on an urban scheme by 5 per cent to \$741.50 and that is really gearing up for the new Local Water Done Well work programme that will come online in the next couple of years.

“It’s vital that Council’s community drinking water schemes are compliant with the new standards and that we can also prepare for the new wastewater standards that are coming.

“We’re also planning to spend nearly \$21m on our roads and footpaths, and that includes the extra \$3m Council decided to put in because of reduced subsidies from NZ Transport Agency. Canterbury councils are currently lobbying Government to improve these subsidies because the

South Island has been underfunded in recent years.”

Mayor Brown said additional funding for Council’s new connecting road to the second Ashburton bridge was not part of this Annual Plan. NZTA is building and paying for the bridge, and Council is paying for the new connecting road at Tinwald.

“The actual cost of constructing this road will be clearer later this year when a contract for the project is let, but we know our part will be more than the \$7.5m we’ve had tagged since 2018. We’ll keep the community informed when we know more, but we’re looking forward to working with NZTA to get it built.”

ROAD CLOSURE

Parts of three roads in the Wakanui area will be temporarily closed on Sunday 30 March for the Ashburton Car Club’s Sealed Autocross event. Roads closed from 8am until 6pm are: Bonningtons Road, from Fitzgerald to Seaside; Seaside Road, from Bonningtons to Fitzgerald; Fitzgerald Road, from Seaside to Bonningtons.

LAKE HOOD

Health New Zealand has issued a health warning for Lake Hood after potentially toxic blue-green algae was found. People should avoid contact with the lake water, and animals (in particular dogs) should not be allowed near the water until the warning is lifted.

PLAN CHANGE

Notice is hereby given that the Ashburton District Council made its decision on Proposed **Private Plan Change 6** to the Ashburton District Plan (2014), at its meeting of 19 March 2025. The Commissioner’s recommendation to approve the Plan Change was adopted by the Council.

The adopted recommendation and the Plan Change are now available on the Council website at ashburtondc.govt.nz. Copies may also be inspected during office hours at Council Offices, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton.

IAN HYDE, Group Manager Compliance & Development

CE Hamish Riach Making hay while the sun still shines



The days might be shortening as we move through autumn, but that doesn’t mean a drop-off in Council activity.

Roading contractors are working full steam to complete rehabilitation projects before the cold sets in, staff across all Council facilities are busy preparing school holiday programmes for April, and last weekend EA Networks Centre hosted a learning triathlon for children.

It was great to see the youngsters swim, bike and run with such enthusiasm around the recreation centre, which also planned to open its outdoor sand court this week.

Our regular Activity Briefings are a good way to see the breadth of Council work and you can find the 112-page

agenda for this week’s briefings on our website’s meeting page.

The summer road rehabilitation work is in its final weeks, with Seafield Road almost complete. To recap, Council will have spent \$2.4 million rehabilitating about 8.5km of roads over the past few months and that’s in addition to the \$8.2m spent on resurfacing and maintaining other sealed and unsealed roads.

A roading project that is not Council’s, but is firmly in Council’s territory, is the major asphaltting project to be undertaken by NZTA on State Highway 1 over the next six weeks. The work needs to be done and there will no doubt be congestion and delays, so follow the detours or find alternative ways to get around town. But most of all, be patient.



Relax at Live on the Lawn

Ashburton Domain will be alive with the sounds of jazz on Saturday afternoon, and we’re inviting the community to lay out picnic blankets and relax.

The event is free, and will be on the Long Lawn, off the layby entrance on West Street.

Bring your own treats, or visit food trucks that will be onsite: Bangkok Wok, Cafe Tango and the Little Honey Co. Bringing the jazz will live bands The Curio Club, Swing 42 and Garden City Combo.

Parking is available on surrounding streets.

Feedback opens on water services

Council is proposing an inhouse, stand-alone business unit to deliver its three water services in the future.

It is one of two options detailed in community consultation that starts today. The other option is a Water Services Council Controlled Organisation (CCO), like Ashburton Contracting Ltd, but focused on water services.

Both models meet Government's Local Water Done Well directive, which imposes more stringent national quality and monitoring standards for drinking water, wastewater and stormwater.

Mayor Neil Brown is writing to all households in the Ashburton District, with details about both options, though Council is proposing the inhouse, stand-alone model. This model is an enhanced model of how Council already delivers three waters services, and will be ringfenced financially – meaning money collected from ratepayers for water services is kept separately from other Council work and spent only on water services work.

When Councillors selected the proposed model recently, they said it still gave Council strong control over the three waters services, and the enhanced inhouse unit would integrate better with other Council teams, like planning, asset management and property - in other words, it would deliver sustainable, resilient and high quality water services while retaining local control.



The alternative option that is in the consultation package details a CCO for water services and this would operate independently with its own governance and management structure, with Council as its shareholder. A board of directors would need to be appointed and set up costs would be slightly more than the inhouse model initially.

The consultation period will run until 27 April and a final decision on which model moves forward will be made by 21 May.

The chosen model will be part of a Water Services Delivery Plan that Council most submit to Government by early September.

Want to know more? Head to itsourplace.nz

PUBLIC MEETINGS

• Methven

Tuesday 8 April, 6pm, Mt Hutt Memorial Hall Theatre

• Ashburton

Wednesday 9 April, 6pm, Te Whare Whakatere Event Space

This meeting will also be livestreamed on our Facebook page and YouTube channel



Methven's plan finds fans

There's been a positive reception to the draft Methven Community Strategic Plan with scores of visitors stopping to chat with members of the community board at the recent Methven A&P show.

Board Chair Kelvin Holmes said that it was pleasing to see a high level of enthusiasm for the actions in the plan.

"People were able to vote with sticky

dots on which actions they supported the most, and it was heartening to see that nearly everything in the plan had a strong level of support.

"Based on the discussions we had, I think we've largely got the draft right, but we're still keen to hear if there are further improvements that can be made."

People can view the draft plan and have their say at itsourplace.nz before feedback closes on **Sunday 6 April**.

COUNCIL LAND TENDER OPPORTUNITIES



1. The tender is for a 5-year Licence to Occupy for 5.6863 hectares Lot 1 DP 28415 and 2.5104 hectare portion of Lot 2 DP 28415 of land on Rakaia Highway, Ashburton.

The Licence to Occupy commences on the 1 June 2025. Tenders must be received by Ashburton District Council on or before 4pm, 10 April 2025. Please contact commercial@adc.govt.nz for a Tender Application form or for more information.



2. The tender is for a 3-year Licence to Occupy for 0.2 hectares of land at 1975 Arundel Rakaia Gorge Road and 1 hectare of land at 1971 Arundel Rakaia Gorge Road.

The Licence to Occupy commences on the 1 May 2025. Tenders must be received by Ashburton District Council on or before 4pm, 10 April 2025. Please contact commercial@adc.govt.nz for a Tender Application form or for more information.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at Hine Paaka (Council Chamber), 2 Baring Square East, unless specified.

Tuesday 2 April, **Council Meeting** (live-streamed), 1pm

Tuesday 8 April, **Local Water Done Well public meeting**, Mt Hutt Memorial Hall, Methven, 6pm

Wednesday 9 April, **Local Water Done Well public meeting**, Te Whare Whakatere, Ashburton, 6pm (livestreamed)

Monday 14 April, **Methven Community Board**, 9am at Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Wednesday 16 April, **Council Meeting** (live-streamed), 1pm

PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a proposal to temporarily close roads to traffic to enable the holding of a community event - **Ashburton Car Club's standing quarter mile sprint**.

Roads proposed to be closed:

- **Blands Road, from the intersection of Dip Road to Methven Highway**

Period of closure: **From 9am until 4.30pm on Saturday, 17 May 2025**

This proposed closure is made under the Local Government Act 1974 – Schedule 10 (11 (e)) and will be considered at the next **Council meeting on 16 April 2025**.

Any person objecting should do so in writing by post or email to the Council, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton, by 4pm on **Monday 7 April 2025**.

NEIL McCANN, Group Manager Infrastructure & Open Spaces

WORKS NOTICES

Seafield Road - Closed between Morris Road and Ashburton Airport, until 12 April for road rehabilitation. Detour available.

King and Alexander Streets, Chertsey - Closed until 13 September while a new water treatment plant is built. The road closure will not impact Chertsey School access.

Michael Street, Rakaia - Closed between Bridge Street (SH1) and Burrows Road on 7 April for power pole removal.

Ealing Montalto Road - Closed between Trevors Road and Cracroft Maronan Road until 5 April, for maintenance. Detours are available.

Seaside Road - Closed between Bonningtons Road and Fitzgerald Road on 30 March, for a car club event.

SH1 to Moore Street - NZTA is undertaking a major asphaltting job on this section of road, detours and traffic management will be in place from 30 March to 9 May. Delays expected.

Full details of local road closures are on our website, ashburtondc.govt.nz

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 5.45am-9pm (pools 8pm Mon & Tue, 7pm Wed-Fri; gym 8pm). Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 6pm, gym 6pm)

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

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