

SAFE COMMUNITIES ASHBURTON DISTRICT

12 MONTH REPORT:

1 July 2023 – 30th June 2024



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

Short version: Keeping ourselves, our families and our communities safe

The Ashburton District Safe Community Programme

The Safe Community Programme for Ashburton District works to increase action on injury prevention and safety promotion through **local collaborations**.

While the programme is small in terms of funding, it aims to make an impact on local community awareness about key safety concerns through agencies pooling resources and working collaboratively.

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.

And the local focus allows for new safety issues/concerns to be addressed as they arise in the community. For example, Ashburton Police alerting the Programme and Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support about concerning levels of theft/burglaries in the district; ACC advising the high rate of skiing/snowboarding injuries for Ashburton children aged 5-14 years; and the worldwide proliferation of scams, many targeting older adults.

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.

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 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.

A Co-ordinator is employed 20 hours a week by Safer Mid Canterbury to work with the Steering Group and roll out projects in the Business Plan.

Working Groups are developed for projects, which agencies “self-select” to join if they have an interest. This also enables a number of agencies/interested parties which are not members of the Steering Group to join the Working Groups. Over this period around 30 local agencies took part in Working Groups across a number of safety promotions.

The Steering Group meets bi-monthly and receives reports from the Working Groups via the Safe Communities Co-ordinator.

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.

The Year in Review

The period 1 July 2023- 30 June 2024 marked the fifth year of the Safe Communities Ashburton District Strategic Plan (2019-2024).

It was a full and busy year, with several successful collaborations delivered to help keep the people of Ashburton District safer (see “Key Achievements” section). Of note were the Ski Safety Schools Roadshow, the sessions on hazards in the home for parents of small children, and the “April Falls” Older Adults Falls Prevention Expo at the new Library, Te Whare Whakatare.

Numbers using the Mid Canterbury Connector community transport service continued to grow, with the number of passenger trips increasing from 188 for the same period last year to 333 for the same period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Since it began the service has made 533 trips around the District.

New projects supported and/or co-ordinated this year were the Bike Skills Park; a Scams Roadshow taking information about scams to older adults living in Ashburton, Hinds, Rakaia and Methven; initial work on the development of an Age Friendly Ashburton Strategy and Action Plan; and assistance to the research project looking at the need for and viability of a public transport service for Ashburton Township.

Key Achievements: 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024:

- **Ski Safety Schools Roadshow** – Mt Hutt staff and the Deputy Mayor visited 4 local schools on the 17th of July 2023, ahead of the schools’ annual ski day on the mountain. Around 500 children heard the ski /snowboard safety messages. Mt Hutt staff were pleased to see that children who had heard the presentation were able to recite the key safety messages when visiting the ski field.
- **Safety Village, Ashburton A and P Show, 27th and 28th October 2023** - Significant time was spent planning and co-ordinating the Safety Village. Nine agencies took part in challenging conditions (hail, rain, and a temperature of 3 degrees on the first day, causing some of the agencies to pack up and go home!) promoting a wide variety of safety messages. Each time the Safety Village has run at the Show it has been impacted by the weather, resulting in loss of opportunity to engage with the public. Agencies observed this year that the Show crowd was not there for serious messages about safety and that another option such as a local “Community Safety Day” on a weekend, moving around the district and with access to an indoor, weather-proof facility, could be a better option moving forward. This is being considered.
- **Unintentional Injury to Children** – this programme uses the Safekids Aotearoa Toolkit to talk to groups of parents, teachers and older children, such as Plunket groups, Early Learning Centres, etc, about dangers in the home (eg access to poisons, medicines, etc). Over the twelve months 189 children and adults heard the presentation and took away a Home Safety Checklist to use to assess any safety issues in their homes.
- **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, etc.

During this period:

- Statistics for the 12-month period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 were:
 - Passengers transported/number of trips – **333** (Compared with the same period 1 July, 2022 to 30 June, 2023 = **188**)
 - Kms travelled – **28,562** (same period previous year = **23,493**)
 - Volunteer driver hours -**694** (same period previous year = **463.88**)
 - Other volunteer hours (trustees) – **99** (same period previous year = **40**)
- From July 2021 (when the service commenced) to 30 June 2024, the service has undertaken 533 trips
- A six-month local newspaper promotion began in September 2023 and attracted a number of new users

- The Mid Canterbury Community Trust held its third AGM on the 28th of November. All trustees except one committed to a further term
- A replacement community vehicle for Rakaia was purchased by the Rakaia Community Association and will be utilised by the Connector service to take people from Rakaia and Methven into Ashburton Township. This will allow the service to expand and relieve the pressure on the existing Connector vehicle
- Funding applications were made to Advance Ashburton and the Mid and South Canterbury Community Trust for a part-time dedicated Co-ordinator role to better support the service as it continues to grow, but were unsuccessful
- **Public Transport Service for Ashburton Township** - at the request of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor Liz McMillan, Councillor Carolyn Cameron and the Safe Communities Co-ordinator initiated a project to look at the need for and viability of a public transport service for Ashburton Township and what it could look like. An independent social researcher was engaged (funded by the Council) to undertake community and health and social service agency research about demand, preferred destinations, willingness to pay, etc. Community and agency response to the research was significant with over 500 online survey responses. The final report and recommendations were presented to the Council on the 5th June
- **Falls Prevention for Older People –**
 - A newspaper feature in the Ashburton Courier promoting strength and balance classes and profiling a local person who has benefitted from the classes was run in October 2023.
 - Two “Ageing Well” sessions were run in October at the (old) Ashburton Library, promoting local strength and balance classes, hydration and being smokefree, the ACC NYMBL app, the Mid Canterbury Connector community transport service, and moderate use of alcohol. These sessions attracted around 100 older adults.
 - An “April Falls” promotion of newspaper advertising and a Mini Falls Prevention Expo at the new Library, Te Whare Whakatere, was held in April 2024. The Expo included 12 agencies and was visited by 200-300 people.
- **Theft/Burglary** – a local newspaper promotion was undertaken in the Ashburton Courier newspaper, along with talks by the Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support Co-ordinator and displays at Ashburton Library.
- **Scams Roadshow** – a collaboration between Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support, ASB Bank, Digital Waitaha and Safe Communities led to 4 community talks in Ashburton, Hinds, Rakaia and Methven, focussing on older adults and how to keep safe from being scammed. Around 50 people attended the talks and the Neighbourhood Support Manager has delivered four more community talks as a result of the roadshow.

- **Age Friendly Ashburton Strategy and Action Plan** - preliminary background research was undertaken into the requirements to develop a Strategy and Action Plan for Ashburton, ahead of the project commencing in July/August.
- **Bike Skills Park** – a Working Group of interested parties (Service clubs, Safer Mid Canterbury, Sport Canterbury and Council Open Spaces staff) was established and a site on the Ashburton Domain secured from the Council. A final initial concept design was completed and approved by the Council. A resource consent was consented. At the time of writing the Working Group is in the process of establishing a trust so that funding can be accessed for the construction of the facility.
- **Safety Promotion** –
 - The Ashburton Courier newspaper’s 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.
 - A “new look” template/header (“Let’s Talk Safety”) has been developed for use in advertising/flyer designs, etc

Concluding Remarks

Ashburton District has developed a robust, evolving 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 scams/fraud)

Thanks to the Ashburton District Council for its funding of the Safe Communities Programme over this period and for supporting the Programme through inclusion in its Long Term Plan for the next 3 years (2024-2027).