

Stockwater exit work under way

Council is progressing work on a transition plan to exit its stockwater delivery service.

The plan will include an intake-by-intake closure strategy, with scheduled engagement with property owners, irrigation companies, Environment Canterbury, Arowhenua and other stakeholders.

Group Manager of Infrastructure and Open Spaces Neil McCann said Council had a blueprint for closing some intakes.

“We’ve been working through a process to close the Pudding Hill intake and we believe the methodical approach we are using can be applied to other intakes.

“The stockwater network is fed by many sources, including springs, the north and south branch of the Ashburton River, Pudding Hill Stream and the Rangitata River, via the Rangitata Diversion Race.

“We know it will be a complicated process, as some stockwater races are also stormwater drains, some are fed by springs and some flow into places like the Tinwald Domain and Ashburton Domain ponds. It will take time and flexibility will be required, and we will do our best to keep everyone informed and included along the way.”

The transition plan is being prepared by Council staff and should be adopted by Council at its meeting on 18 December.



Meetings of the working group set up to monitor progress will be held over the next few weeks to review the draft Transition Plan before recommending adoption by Council in December.

“We know that some in the wider community are as interested in the stockwater system as those who pay targeted stockwater rates,” Mr McCann said. “We have a core membership of the working group, and stakeholders will be invited to join in as appropriate.”

Some of the work under way at the moment is scheduling the intakes in an order of priority so that the timeframes will be clearer for those who currently use the stock water system. This will clearly identify when we will engage with property owners and stakeholders for each area.

Council committed to exiting the stockwater delivery service as part of the

Long Term Plan 2024-34 and has set a target date of June 2027. It does not mean all races and intakes will be closed, as some may need to be retained for various reasons including ecological, drainage and cultural reasons.

Part of the Council’s decision to exit the service was also because it would need to install expensive fish screens at the intakes. Council has been progressively closing races over the past decade, where property owners agree, and will continue to process closure applications during the transition period.

Mr McCann said the Pudding Hill closure investigation had been a good learning experience for Council and property owners.

“We have been using the services of John Wright, who knows a great deal about water in this district, and in some cases alternative water can be accessed through a simple rain storage tank system or from an irrigation company with pipes in the area.

“Council will not pay for alternative water options on individual properties, but it can provide some good information when the time comes.”

Information and regular updates about progress of the stockwater transition plan will be posted on Council’s website, and interested parties can also sign up to receive a stockwater newsletter by email.

SHORT AND SWEET

FIREWORKS

Pets and fireworks don't mix, so with Guy Fawkes night approaching pet owners should think about how they can keep them safe. Dogs, cats and other pets have far more sensitive hearing than ours, and they have no understanding of the concept of celebrations with fireworks. The noises and flashes frighten them, so consider keeping them inside on 5 November, or when fireworks are being used.



ETHNIC FUN DAY

Council is helping coordinate a fun day for migrants and newcomers to find out about emergency services and community organisations in the district that are available to support them. There'll be a host of interactive, free and fun activities at the Hampstead Sports Club on **Saturday 19 October**, from 10am until 2pm. Come along and join in!

BETTER TOGETHER

Council is working with police, other councils and road safety partners in October to target drink driving in our communities. Alcohol is a major factor in contributing to death and serious injuries on our roads. This month, you can expect to see more police doing checks to keep you and everyone else safe.

SAVE THE DATE

Ashburton’s big Christmas tree will be installed in Baring Square East this year, and a party is being planned for Saturday 30 November to switch on the Christmas lights. The square will be buzzing from 5pm until 9.30pm, when the tree will be lit up. East Street, Cameron Street and Baring Square East Road are planned to be closed for the event, and Santa will make an appearance.

CE Hamish Riach

Holiday influx of happy visitors fills facilities

The school holidays brought a surge of visitors to our Council facilities, with the people counters at EA Networks Centre hitting 23,000 over the four days of an under 14 basketball tournament.

With 54 teams in action, plus their groups of supporters, the stadium was heaving and it was a pleasure to see such enthusiasm and energy, which had spinoffs for the whole district.

While basketball generated a lot of visitors, the entire sport and recreation facility was busy during the school holidays, with a total of 36,000 people counted at the door for the two-week period. The inflatable water park was also a hit over the three days it was in operation, with just over 1000 people having a go – including the mayor, deputy mayor, a number of councillors and staff.

The library, within Te Whare Whakatere, was also buzzing, with 7500 visitors

recorded during the school holiday period. Some of the most popular activities saw youngsters make their own bouncy balls and origami frogs, while the laser cutter was running flat out for other DIY crafts.

It wasn't just the kids having fun, the ladies from the Red Hat Society also popped in for a craft class.

Over the road at the art gallery and museum, the Clever Crustaceans exhibit being toured by Te Papa and NIWA was a drawcard, and just over 1500 visitors were recorded at that facility over the holidays.

It's great to see the community enjoying these facilities, and all the activities they offer.

Staff are currently planning other community events, including Light up the Night, which will take place at Baring Square East on Saturday 30 November. The giant Christmas tree will be lit up that night and take pride of place in the square once again.



Events are also being planned over summer to celebrate 160 years of the Ashburton Domain, so watch out for those when the weather warms up.

We're also expecting the warm weather to lead to the usual seasonal weed growth at Lake Hood, and this year we have a new weapon to deal with it.

Council has contracted Ashburton Contracting Ltd to manage the lake and they will be deploying a weed harvester that will work something like a lawn mower. The weed is cut and collected, and will be removed from the lake.

It's a learning curve this summer as we figure out the mowing cycles, and how to operate the machine in the most efficient and effective way.

The weed harvester is part of work at the lake to minimise the risk of algal blooms and we've also installed a new diversion that brings water to the western canals and helps improve water circulation.

Awa Awa Rata bursting into bloom

Awa Awa Rata Reserve is bursting into bloom with a spring display of rhododendrons.

October and November are some of the best months to see the spectacular hybrids in flower and take a stroll through the reserve.

Infrastructure and Open Spaces Group Manager Neil McCann said the reserve was 14km out of Methven, at the base of Mt Hutt.

“The first shrubs were planted there in 1968 and enthusiastic members of the Awa Awa Rata Reserve Society have continued planting and maintaining it over the decades, with Council’s help.”

It’s a perfect spot for certain species of rhododendrons, with its temperate climate and elevation, at 400 metres above sea level. The reserve is backed by native bush, with several marked trails.

Mr McCann said the reserve was popular with rhododendron fans, but also with families and others keen for a bush walk.



“Some of the rhododendrons have just started to flower and I’d encourage people to visit over the next few weeks as it will become very colourful and spectacular. It’s a great place for a picnic and a walk.”

The rhododendron walk is 10 minutes long and follows a stream through native bush and rhododendron plantings.

The Awa Awa walk is 15 minutes long and starts in the reserve and climbs gently through native bush before joining the end of the metalled road through the reserve.

Other more challenging tracks are signposted in the area, taking from 30 minutes to three hours. Loops can be made by combining tracks.

Awards honour our busy volunteers

Ashburton Mayor Neil Brown marked the achievements of a busy farmer, an active retiree and a caring community organisation at the 2024 Community Civic Awards this week.

Hinds farmer Peter Lowe received the Mayor’s Award for Public Service, the Ashburton RSA received the Ashburton Medal and Robert Maxwell, of Methven, received a Civic Award.

Mayor Brown said it had been a privilege reading through the work and achievements of all three recipients.

“Peter has been involved in a range of volunteer work, from school boards of trustees to environmental work, and some of it quite challenging. It will be



an honour to present him the Mayor’s Award for Public Service, because he has truly worked hard on behalf of the whole district for more than 40 years.

“Robert has recently been involved in protecting a slice of Methven history,

through his work with the Methven Lions and cleaning up old headstones in the Methven cemetery.

“The Ashburton RSA has also done important work for war veterans and the wider community for more than 100 years, and will be recognised with an Ashburton Medal.”

The civic awards were held in the Council Chamber, at Te Whare Whakatare, on Thursday and Mayor Brown said it was great to see a big group of supporters in attendance. “Our district runs with the help of many volunteers and they often seek to avoid the limelight. It’s special to be able to acknowledge their work on occasions like this.”

Head over to our website to read the recipients’ full citations.

Over 80? Park longer, for free, with a permit

Council has special parking permits for drivers over 80 years old, allowing them to park longer in free parking spaces around the town centre.

The permits need to be displayed where parking wardens can see them. It means an over-80 driver parking in a 30-minute spot can stay for 60 minutes, and in a 60-minute spot they can stay for up to 120 minutes (two hours).

There are no concessions for parks with time restrictions under 30 minutes or over 60 minutes, or in the Eastfield pay and display car park.



The over-80 permits recognise that older drivers sometimes need a bit of extra time to park and move around the CBD. All you have to do is come into Council and provide your details – the permit process is easy.

PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a proposal to temporarily close roads to ordinary traffic for the holding of a community event - **Ashburton Santa Parade**.

Roads proposed to be closed:

- **Walnut Avenue, from Oak Grove to West Street**
- **Creek Road, from Walnut Avenue to Queens Drive**

Period of closure:

- **From 10am until 2pm on Saturday 7 December**

Any person objecting should lodge a notice of their objection and grounds in writing by post or email to the Council, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton by 4pm on **Friday 25 October**.

NEIL MCCANN
Group Manager Infrastructure Services

COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

Meeting agendas are online at ashburtondc.govt.nz

Monday 21 October, **Methven Community Board**, 9am at Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Tuesday 22 October, **Ashburton Water Zone Committee**, 1pm (live-streamed)

Wednesday 23 October, **Council Activity Briefings**, 9.30am (live-streamed)

Wednesday 23 October, **Audit & Risk Committee**, 1pm (live-streamed)

Wednesday 30 October, **Council Meeting**, 1pm (live-streamed)

WORKS NOTICES

Gardiners Road - Closed between Pendarves Rakaia Road and Kyle Road until 31 October.

Reynolds Road - Closed between State Highway 77 and Ledgerwoods Road until 26 October.

Back Track - Closed between Highbank Cairnbrae Road and Woods Road until 31 October. Contractors are carrying out road maintenance. Detours are available.

Dromore Methven Road - one-way closure, no entry from State Highway 1 until 21 October. Contractors are carrying out road maintenance. Detours available.

Dromore Methven Road - Closed between Pole Road and Winchmore Lauriston Road until 28 October. Contractors undertaking road maintenance. Detours available.

Allens Road - Closed between Harrison Street and Elizabeth Street from 21-25 October for property development and water works.

Full road closure details are available at ashburtondc.govt.nz

PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a proposal to temporarily close roads to ordinary traffic for the holding of a community event - **Light up the Night**.

Roads proposed to be closed:

- **East Street, from Havelock Street to Cameron Street**
- **Cameron Street, from East Street to Victoria Street**
- **Baring Square East Street, from Havelock Street to Cameron Street**

Period of closure:

- **From 7am until 9.30pm on Saturday 30 November**

Any person objecting should lodge a notice of their objection and grounds in writing by post or email to the Council, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton by 4pm on **Friday 25 October**.

NEIL MCCANN
Group Manager Infrastructure Services

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)