



A bi-monthly newsletter from your local Council - November/December 2012

“Progress is impossible without change” Mayor Neil Sinclair

This is my eighth Christmas message. With an election coming up in 2013 and possible governance changes in the wind, it could well be my last as Mayor of the South Waikato. Will the South Waikato still be around in time to come, who knows?

When I look back over the past eight years and remember all that has happened; what Council and the community have achieved; what I have led; I am proud.

Firstly I would like to pay tribute to the hardworking and dedicated Councillors and staff I have worked with over the years. We've all got the district at heart and that shows in everything we have accomplished together.

Once you start a list of progress we have made, new facilities we have built, new initiatives we have started and the continued social and economic growth and development of our district it's hard to stop and the list grows.

The Waikato River Trails started in 2004 and was completed late last year. Council has contributed over \$1 million dollars to this initiative and it is heartening to

see the economic benefits of our investment starting to show.

Having 30,000 hectares of forestry converted to farmlands had a massive impact on our district.

Another project that I have seen grow from inception is our commitment to improving our air quality. This project started in 2005 with education and incentive programmes and Council is currently looking at introducing a more regulatory approach to support these.

Using the South Waikato Development Funding of \$4.5 million for further capital development is another initiative that has had much success. The bulk of this funding went towards building the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre that now stands complete. We put the remaining funding towards the Warm Homes project, Waikato River Trails, the Tirau Village Green, development at the airport, the Putaruru Timber Museum and the YMCA.

The current buzzword is collaboration, working together to save costs and improve efficiencies. I'm proud to say we

have been working collaboratively with other Councils for many years; from recruitment to the Regional Policy Statement and most recently our new website. Working together makes sense to us and we will continue to do so.

In Putaruru we have a brand new swimming pool, new office, a bigger library and considerable improvements to the Plaza. The Tirau Village Green was completed and officially opened just over a month ago. Tirau continues to grow as our northern gateway.

Since I started on Council over 10 years ago, toilets were raised every single year... so we did something about it. Over two years we installed several modern public toilet facilities in our towns and local reserves.

But it's not all about what Council has done and achieved. The district has strengthened and business developments have changed our landscape. From a refurbished supermarket, new businesses and a new petrol station in Putaruru; to two new supermarkets in Tokoroa; this is proof that investors recognise our central location and business

friendly attitude. Arapuni too has seen growth from tourism generated by the Waikato River Trails. Council tries very hard to make investing in our district and growing business in our towns as easy as we can.

Advocating for improved health care, health facilities and the continued operation of the Tokoroa Hospital has been something that Council has put a lot of time and effort into. And we are again pleased with the result.

For me personally, being included in the Treaty Settlement signing between the Crown and Raukawa was a true highlight of my term as Mayor. Council's relationship with Raukawa has always been strong and it continues to grow. Our collaborative efforts on major projects and challenges facing the district make for smooth sailing. I know our Council's strong relationship with its local iwi is the envy of many other Mayors. And I take personal pride in that.

When I look back at where the district was a decade ago and where it is now, I am very proud to have been a part of it.



“On behalf of Council, I wish you a happy and safe holiday.” Neil

IN brief

- Council is currently open for public consultation on its proposed District Plan. Branded Shaping South Waikato, this important document reflects how we manage our natural environment. Consultation is open until February next year. More details can be found on our website: www.southwaikato.govt.nz.
- The Speed Indication Device will soon be moved to Arapuni Road to revisit speed issues within Arapuni village.
- Refurbishment of the The Dog public toilets will start soon.

IN side

- 2&3 Clean Air Costs and control
- 4&5 Looking at our waters Our new website
- 6&7 Things to do in the South Waikato
- 8 Councillor Columns News in brief

IN house

Produced in-house for the South Waikato community by the South Waikato District Council.

Editorial: Kerry Fabrie, Communications Manager, 07 885 0720

Print: Chaucer

What is the main cause of poor air quality?

We have air quality issues in our district, especially in Tokoroa and we simply have to do something about it. We have to improve our air, for the health of our community and continued economic growth.

Our poor air quality is caused by woodburners and poor burning habits. Some people in our community still believe that it is caused by other things like transport and industry. Of course these are factors, but the **primary cause of our poor air quality is woodburners.**

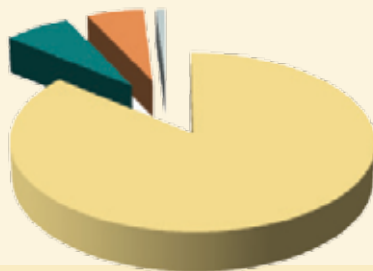
So how about replacing yours, and making a positive change for the health and continued

- wood burners (86%)
- transport (7%)
- outdoor burning (6%)
- industry (1%)

economic growth of our community. Council has two financial assistance schemes to help residents and ratepayers convert to cleaner heat.

The *Warm Homes Clean Air* scheme is available to people with community services cards; and the *Heat Swap* schemes is available for homeowners who fall outside the WHCA criteria.

Contact Council on 885 0340; we are here to assist and guide our community into making this positive change.



Do the right thing... clean up your heating!

Get ready for our cold winter during our hot summer

There's been a lot of talk about old woodburners, new woodburners and other heating appliances of late, largely because of the proposed Clean Air Bylaw Council is looking at introducing.

Council has received considerable feedback. One important comment being "it's not just about the age of the woodburner, it's about how we use our woodburner too". And these people are absolutely correct. It certainly is!

Correct burning habits will reduce PM₁₀ regardless of the age of the woodburner.

Tips on how to burn better:

- Burn DRY SEASONED wood not WET GREEN wood. You should have already collected your wood for next winter, have it stacked in a dry place, all ready for use. *If you haven't, do it now!* DRY SEASONED wood not only burns better, but it releases considerably less PM₁₀ into the air.
- DRY and SEASONED wood should ideally have been chopped down and stored in a dry area for between six to 12 months prior to when you need to use it. *That means NOW!*
- Clean your flue regularly; summer is an ideal time to do this. *That means NOW!*

Vandalism has a point? Nope, just a cost!

The recent vandalism of the Dregghorn carpark recycling container has yet again highlighted what this sort of anti-social behaviour costs Council and ratepayers.

The damage to the recycling container was caused by some people putting fireworks into it and boom...



Must have been fairly exciting...

What is not so exciting is the quote Council has just received to fix the container.

Repairs total \$2,100 and preparation and painting \$1,000; amounting to a total of \$3,100.

That's \$3,100 from rates.

Yes, \$3,100 of your money.

And that's just the physical repair costs. Council staff have spent hours on sorting this out too.

Vandalism costs Council on average around \$15,000 each month. Vandalism includes things like ripping out plants from our reserves, stealing road signs, doing donuts on our reserves, setting fire to our assets, knocking over walls in our cemeteries, dumping rubbish on the road side or public areas, littering in the streets and tagging.

Vandalism costs increase during holiday periods; not that we're pointing fingers or anything, but that is an historical fact.

If you see an act of vandalism, report it to the police immediately.

Talking safety with our Police



Family Violence not OK

Family Violence is a crime, it is not a private matter. People in violent relationships often cannot help themselves and need your help. In an emergency dial 111 and ask for the Police. Your call could save a life.

Nearly half of all homicides in New Zealand are Family Violence related.

If you are a victim of Family Violence or in a relationship that makes you feel fearful about your or anyone else's safety seek help as soon as possible.

If you know someone who is a victim of Family Violence, you can help by listening and being supportive, ensuring the person and any children are safe.

If you know someone who is a violent person, you can help by telling them "It is not OK" and find them help.

Teenagers and alcohol

With the warmer weather approaching many of our young people will be exposed to alcohol. Many use alcohol to deal with stress, frustration and conflict or as a result of peer pressure. Yet too much alcohol only makes these problems worse.

Parents have a hard job too as they know the dangers of too much alcohol. Fights, vehicle crashes and inappropriate behaviour are just some of the dangers and often parental advice is rejected.

For best results respect your teenager's opinion, but be honest and firm. Discuss alcohol with your teenagers and set clear rules. Stick to them. Not too strict and not too easy going is best.

If you think your teenager has a drug or alcohol problem, contact the Alcohol and Drug Helpline 0800 787 797.

The Tokoroa Police would like to wish the community a safe and happy festive season and we look forward to working with you all in the New Year.

Costs not always in our control

Councils are frequently urged to rein in their expenditure and improve efficiencies while providing good quality services and infrastructure. Yet there are many costs imposed by legislation over which we have little or no control.

Given the criticism aimed at Councils for rate increases, decisions and Council costs, it is important our community understand the extent of cost shifting in New Zealand.

Too frequently legislation and regulations adopted by central government and handed to local government have a noticeable financial impact on ratepayers. Cost shifting takes three broad forms:

Cost shifting

This refers to the transfer of responsibilities to local government without funding and/or the reduction of funding for a local government activity that then requires a greater contribution from rates.

Biggest contributor: the reduction in funding for road maintenance and renewals which has been experienced by many rural and provincial councils.

Second biggest contributor: the cost of the Government's 2008 Waste Minimisation Act.

Other significant contributors:

- cuts in government funding to services as diverse as school swimming pools and Enviroschools
- costs created by Treaty settlements
- reduced grants for civil defence.

And it doesn't stop there. Pending is the Alcohol Reform Bill which will give local authorities a new role in the regulation of venues that sell alcohol, but no additional funding to undertake that role. While we welcome this change, there will be a cost, that is likely to be met by rates.

Raising the bar

This is a requirement on councils to raise the level of service for particular services, beyond what local ratepayers themselves are prepared to pay for.

Biggest contributor: the Resource Management Act 1991

Second biggest contributor: the reform of the Building Act

Other significant contributors:

- water and waste water standards
- administration of the Dog Control Act
- the emissions trading scheme.

Regulatory creep

This is where regulations and processes are imposed on us that increase administrative costs.

Biggest contributor: the long term planning provisions of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002

Second biggest contributor: the 2010 amendments to the LGA 2002

Other significant contributors:

- the Public Records Act
- Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Act 2007
- Public Transport Management Act 2008
- Land Transport amendment Act 2008

Since 1989 councils have experienced what can only be called a tsunami of administrative and regulatory costs justified on the basis that they are necessary to improve accountability or transparency.

Strong accountability and transparency is important for our democracy. It is important that ratepayers hold local Councils accountable for decisions made and funding committed. It is equally important that the community understand that it's not all in our control.



Christmas closure times

Council offices and other Council managed facilities will be closed at times over the festive season. We suggest you cut this column out and put it on the fridge to remind you of the office hours, library, SW Sport and Events Centre and swimming pool hours, refuse and recycling collection changes and emergency contact details over the holidays.

Contact details

Council main number (water, sewerage) 885 0340
 Environmental Health.....0274905283
 Noise Control 885 0340
 Building Control.....0272 135 171
 Animal Control885 0340 ext 1

Council Offices

The Tokoroa Office and Putaruru Office* are closed from 5pm on Friday 21 December. Opens on Thursday 3 January at 8am. Thursday 3 January and Friday 4 January there will only be skeleton staff available. * open for libraries services, refer below

Rural Fire

No rural or urban rural fire permits will be issued from Friday 21 December 2012 to Monday 7 January 2013. Urgent calls only to 885 0340.

South Waikato Sport and Events Centre

Closed on statutory holidays.

Libraries

	24 Dec	25 Dec	26 Dec	27 Dec	28 Dec	29 Dec	30 Dec	31 Dec	1 Jan	2 Jan	3 Jan
Tokoroa Library	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	9.30am to 5.30pm	9.30am to 5.30pm	9.30am to 2.00pm	CLOSED	9.30am to 5.30pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	9.30am to 5.30pm
Putaruru Library	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	9.00am to 5.00pm	9.00am to 5.00pm	9.30am to 12.30pm	CLOSED	9.00am to 5.00pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	8.00am to 5.00pm
Tirau Library	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	2.30pm to 5.30pm

Pools

All pools are open normal hours EXCEPT for December 24 (when all pools will close at 6pm), Christmas Day (closed all day), 31 December (again, closing at 6pm) and New Years Day (open from midday).

Refuse and recycling

Collections on Christmas Day and New Years Day are affected. If you were supposed to have your refuse and recycling collected on those days, it will be collected the day BEFORE, ie 24 December and 31 December.

All landfill and transfer station sites are closed on Tuesday 25 December 2012 and Tuesday 1 January 2013. The Tokoroa landfill site is also closed on Wednesday 26 December 2012.

At Christmas time there is usually an overabundance of recycling from an increase in beer bottles, juice containers and cardboard. Don't forget that the urban recycling centres are available for you to use and they are serviced every day... your recycling doesn't need to pile up and over flow.

Water on Tap

It's simple isn't it? You turn on the tap and out comes clean fresh healthy water... easy as. How many of us really even think about it? But is it that simple? No. Supplying our communities with a steady flow of safe potable is really quite complex. Read on...

Council owns and manages six water supply systems; four in the main towns of Tokoroa, Putaruru, Tirau and Arapuni and two smaller supplies in Lichfield and Athol.

"South Waikato residents are either spring or bore fed," explains Andrew Pascoe, Council's Services Manager. "Tokoroa, Lichfield, Athol and Arapuni are bore fed only; Tirau is spring fed only; and Putaruru is fed from spring and bore, or a combination depending on where your property is located and demand."

Water Treatment Plants are designed on capacity. Engineers look at the population (and projected growth) and current usage (and possible increases) and design water treatment plants to capacity.

Legislation

A few years ago government introduced new legislation called the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards which

effectively requires all water supplies to be disinfected in two ways. This requirement has added greatly to the costs of treatment plants. Each town, depending on population has to meet the standards at different times. Tokoroa for example has to meet these Standards by the end of this financial year; Putaruru and Tirau by the end of the next financial year and the remaining supplies the year after.

There are two main methods of disinfection: ultraviolet and chlorine. Both methods work differently. With UV treatment, water runs through a pipe over UV lights and the UV kills the bugs; however it doesn't 'stay' in the water. Chlorine on the other hand is added to the water and remains in the system all the way to the tap.

Council has just received substantial funding from the Ministry of Health towards installing a UV treatment system at the Putaruru Water Treatment Plant. While this project is costing around \$300,000, more than 50% will be funded by the Ministry, which is great news for ratepayers.

Currently the Tokoroa water supply is



The blue sockets pictured here are connected to UV lights that run the length of the pipe. Water passes over these lights to be disinfected.

twice treated by chlorine and UV. The bore fed portion of Putaruru is treated with chlorine and the spring fed areas are currently untreated; however the new UV treatment will apply to these areas. The Tirau system has both chlorine and UV treatment; and Arapuni, Lichfield and Athol are all treated with chlorine.

Aging system

Our water supply system is aging. Pipes break underground from time to time and need to be replaced. Council has a pipe replacement programme that we work through every year. The initial pipes in our three largest towns of Tokoroa, Putaruru and Tirau are between 60 and 70 years old and are reaching the end of their life.

Using existing data regarding repairs and frequency as well as high tech MRI scans we are able to prioritise our

pipe replacement programme. We remove the old pipe and replace sections with more modern PVC piping.

Water conservation

The South Waikato has an adequate supply of water however, that does not mean we shouldn't make every effort to conserve water.

Council has recently commissioned water leak detection in Putaruru and will be rolling that out in coming years across the district. Council has to show a reduction in water usage in terms of its new water supply resource consent; and this is one way we can detect leaks in our own pipes and leaks coming from private property. In the future Council will also need to introduce a trigger for water restrictions as part of our water supply demand management plan.

And with summer coming...

Ratepayers and residents can certainly do their bit over the coming hot summer months. Here's a few water saving tips:

- Fix dripping taps. You can save up to 100 litres a day (that's up to 36,500 litres of water a year) just by replacing a worn washer.
- Make sure your hot water system thermostat is not set too high. Adding cold water to cool very hot water is wasteful.
- Turn the tap off when you're brushing your teeth or shaving. If you brush your teeth twice a day, for one minute each time, and leave the tap running, you waste approximately 28 litres per day - that's over 10,000 litres a year per person.
- Take shorter showers - they also save you time and hot water costs.
- Water gardens in the early morning or late evening to minimise evaporation.



New look and feel for Council website

Have you visited Council's website recently? It's a got a brand new look and feel to it; and heaps more functions.

"Council has been working with a service provider Datacom to develop our new website, in collaboration with Taupo and Waipa Councils. The website has been built using a common template however each Council was able to apply its brand, look and feel," says Council's IT Manager Richard Henderson. "This came after Hamilton City and Rotorua had done a similar project with Datacom using the same templates, so we had some of their development behind us too."

Of the three Councils, our website is already live, Taupo is on the verge of going live and Waipa is in the design stages.

The website features a few new services like our on-line rates payments tool and our events and facility booking page. Other on-line services are in the pipeline and will be introduced in due course.

Mr Henderson explains that there are several benefits to local government collaborating on projects like this one.

"A key benefit is the reduction in cost by sharing development and hosting," he said. "Given the work that Hamilton and

Rotorua had done, the system was already proven, so there was little risk in committing to the process. Basically it was a proven cookie-cutter approach that suited our needs and had effectively been tested by other local government organisations."

There are several other benefits including:

- A similar look, feel and functionality of websites, providing a standard format across the Waikato region.
- The existing online transactional capability of the site can be further enhanced by looking at new features and services other Councils have introduced, eg Hamilton City Council have introduced a dog module and Taupo is developing a LIM module. These new capabilities are transferable between Councils providing back office processes can be suitably modified and integrated.

So pop on to our new website and have a look around - www.southwaikato.govt.nz.

A guided tour

1. The top strap across contains quick links to popular pages like latest news, FAQs etc.
2. The **Home** page is where you will find the most recent information - these rotate.
3. The **Our District** tab is less about Council and more about the District, so from a tourism perspective.
4. The **Our Council** tab is about the governance and management of Council so contains things like agendas, news, employment vacancies among others.
5. The **Our Services** tab is where you will find our services like animal control, building, roading etc.
6. The search function will help you get around the site.
7. The **Do It Online** section is more of the 'action' section and our newest feature. Do you want to find something, join a mailing group, request information or provide feedback?
8. The bottom six blocks are popular links to Council's other websites like community connect, key facilities or important pages within the site.

What's on at The Plaza?

... by Plaza Manager, Nicola Warrington

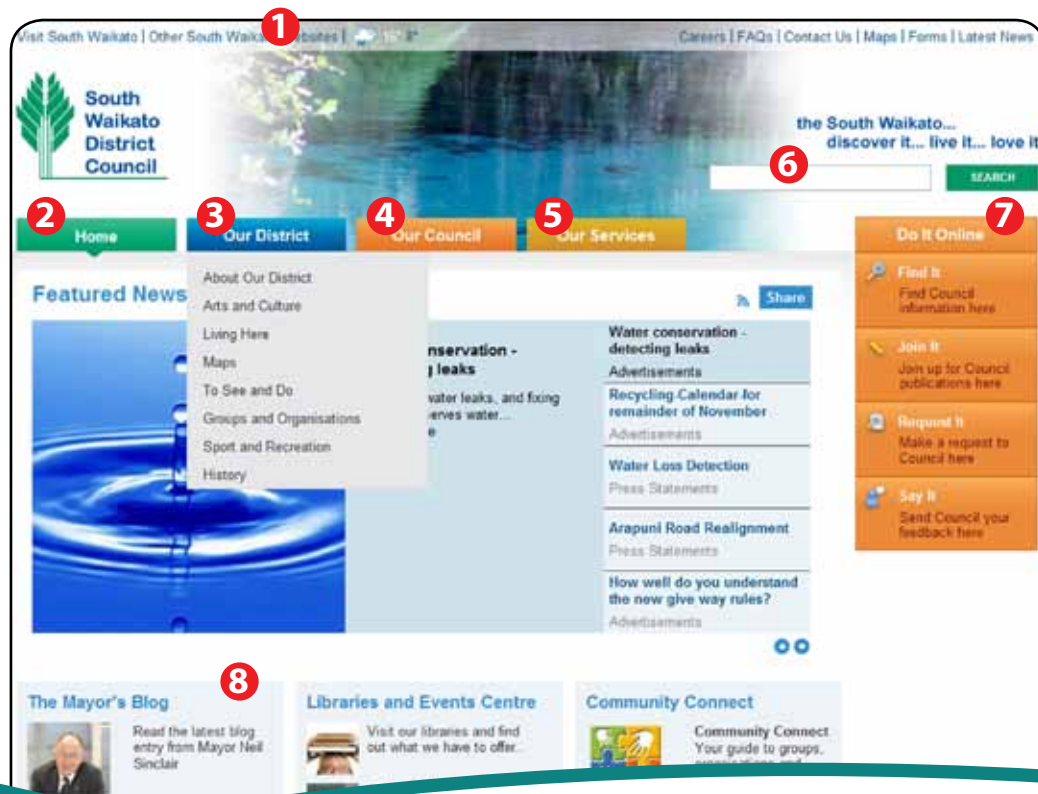
November saw a most wonderful evening for the Putaruru Rotary Gala Dinner and the fantastic fundraising efforts for Putaruru St Johns. Matthew Monteith played the grand piano while just fewer than 200 diners enjoyed their delicious meal prepared by the Kiwi Spit Roast Company. Diners got the chance to see Putaruru College's Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD) short film competition, which made the finals of the Wintec secondary schools film competition.

Gary and Sheryl Dawson, CEOs of The Chiefs/The Magic provided the evening's speaker entertainment followed by a charity auction. The evening ended with a stunning array of delectable desserts from Chocolate Camellia and music from the very talented local group All Of A Kind. Putaruru Rotary presented a cheque for \$13,000 on the night and more funds are continuing to be added to the St. Johns appeal from the night. Well done to Putaruru Rotary and everyone who made the night so very special.

At the beginning of 2013 The Plaza will see some of the rear original seats replaced with newer modern theatre seats. Funding from the South Waikato District Council will enable 134 seats to be replaced. There has already been much interest in owning the original seats which will be removed and if you would like more information, please email theplaza@plaza.org.nz.

The Plaza continues to be very busy towards the end of the year with Diane Willcox School of Dance Exams and Aspire Arts Academy, Matamata, end of year production.

Here's wishing you all a Happy and Safe Christmas and New Year.



South Waikato is a beautiful place for healthy exercise

Got family staying with you for the holidays? Bouncing off the walls a little? Looking for something to do with the children this summer? Use the long hours of summer to explore your beautiful district; meet new people; and do something healthy and active with our family and friends. Summer and the holiday season is a perfect time to get a little bit fitter, slimmer and healthier; while having fun with your family.

MAKING A SPLASH

One facility that provides for all weather and all levels of fitness is the South Waikato Indoor Swimming Pools in Tokoroa.

A new UV water treatment plant greatly reduces the chlorine needed in the pools which are spotlessly clean (from the water clarity through to showers), and are heated to a luxurious 29.5°C.

The pools are managed by friendly, experienced staff who provide a range of activities to cater for everyone – even if they can't swim.

Pools Manager Richard Gaby said people often come in a bit shy, but soon realise it is just about you doing whatever you are comfortable with.

"Some people are selfconscious. If they prefer to wear shorts or a T-shirt over their swimming apparel, that's fine," said Richard. "And there are quieter times. It's just a

matter of talking to staff and saying, 'Hey, I want a bit more privacy, when's a good time to come?'"

There is a huge range of equipment free to use, including aqua-jogging belts, woggles, shapes, tubes, fins, flutter boards and resistance hand paddles. Staff can show you exercises or you can join one of the classes where laughter and jokes mix with the music. And of course you can always do laps, with the big pacer clock to keep you on target.

Richard Gaby says exercising in water is a low impact, high intensity way that can really benefit heart and lung efficiency in a 20-30 minute workout.

"We make no secret that we attack the cardio. It is not what weight you are now – just about a fitter, healthy you. If your internal organs are improving – then the rest will take care of itself."

And of course, a hot spa is a great way to relax after your workout.

RIDING A BIKE

The Memorial Sports Ground is a popular place for a stroll, but the more adventurous might want to explore the Cougar Mountain Bike Park on the far side.

Walkers are welcome, though mountain bikes have priority on the 30 km of track

volunteers maintain through CHH forest.

Warren Goodhue of Tokoroa Mountain Bike Club said they are spoilt in Tokoroa for cycling.

"We have Cougar Park and the Waikato River Trails, with Taupo and Rotorua closeby."

Cougar Park is well mapped and signposted and anyone is welcome to call into South Waikato Cycles and discuss it with Warren.

Shane Allen often bikes in Cougar Park, taking his three-year-old and five-year-old daughters.

"They love it," said Shane. "There is a lot of long, shallow-incline track and lot of variety. It is not too difficult but there is some steep stuff which is good on the bikes if you want it. There is a lot of trail there and you can have some fun."

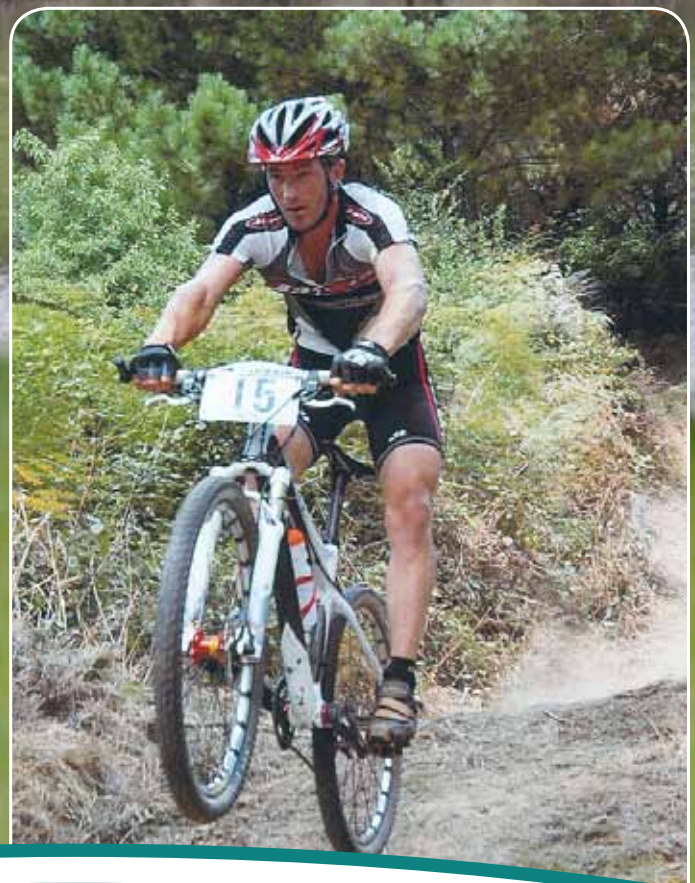
TAKING A WALK

Another way to exercise that also soothes the soul is doing a lap of Lake Moana-nui. With a 2480 metre-long concrete path circling the lake, it takes under an hour to walk amongst the park-like grounds.

There are plenty of chairs for a rest on the way around, a big play area for children and prolific bird-life both in the trees and on the water.

Keep your eye out for the fitness stations coming. The outdoor exercise equipment will be dotted around providing a circuit of a variety of exercises you can do at your own pace.

If you want to extend yourself, the reserve crosses the road and follows the Matarawa Stream. The first 1400 metres already has a footpath but you can follow the reserve right though to Cullen Crescent should you wish.



DOING IT ALL

Putaruru and Tirau residents have their own pools in the summer months – both 25m long and suitable for doing laps.

Putaruru residents often wander through Glenshea Park or stroll along the 1100m gravel footpath bordering the tranquil Oraka Stream.

A more varied loop starts from Harry Martin Drive, winds through the trees (and sheep) in the Loraine Moller Arboretum to the Oraka stream. Follow the stream down through the Rotary Grove, over a style and through a paddock to Ruru Crescent and follow the roads back to the start. There is a map at the start and it takes less than an hour.

Take some time out this summer to do something new – our district has a lot to offer.



Opening Times and Prices

South Waikato Indoor Pools

Open: year round
Weekdays: 5:30am – 8:00pm
Weekends and Public Holidays: 7:30 – 8pm

Single entry adult: \$4.50, child: \$2, senior: \$3.50, family: \$10

Putaruru War Memorial Summer Pools

Open: mid Nov to mid Mar
Weekdays: 11.30-1pm and 3pm – 6pm
Weekends, public and school holidays: 12noon – 6pm

Single entry adult: \$2.50, child or senior: \$1.50

Tirau Summer Pools*

Open: mid Nov to mid Mar
Weekdays except Thursday: 3pm – 6pm
Weekends, public and school holidays: 12noon – 6pm

Single entry adult: \$2.50, child and senior: \$1.50

** At the time of writing the Tirau Pools were not open due to a leak, however Council is working on this and it is hoped that by the time you are reading this, they will be open.*

IN brief continued...

- A 'driver distraction' campaign was carried out over two days. A total of 930 vehicles were observed. Of these 30 were spotted texting, 115 were talking and 20 were doing something else (like smoking or eating).
- The Clean Air Bylaw consultation period is closed. Council received 76 submissions, and 20 people wish to speak with Council. A hearing date has yet to be set and decisions have yet to be made. Council appreciates the community's feedback and your concerns.
- Work has started on the Arapuni Road Re-alignment project with site preparation. This project will take around six months. Traffic flow will be affected from time to time.
- The Weka Place Walkway will remain open and Council is investigating additional lighting.
- Congratulations to the library team for winning two awards at the Māori Language Awards - the Community Award category and the Supreme Award for their continued commitment

IN the know

... Council manages over 240ha of parks, reserves, playgrounds and sports facilities. There are 48 urban reserves, six lakeside reserves, six sportsgrounds, 13 playgrounds, three skateboard areas, five scenic bush reserves, two recreational reserves.

This column features a snippet about Council. Got a question, drop an email to kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz.

IN view

If you would like to receive this newsletter in electronic format please email kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz.

If you are a ratepayer, you will still receive a hard copy.

Councillor Column

Alan Blair

The people of our District face many challenges. School leavers appear to have reduced job opportunities as the reported unemployment rate rises. Farmers are forecast to have lower incomes due to softening in payout prices; and many in the Forestry sector are having a tough time as reduced demand combined with the high exchange rate makes trading very difficult.

Farmers are amongst the most resilient in our community. Their challenges are complex and expensive to resolve as they meet higher standards for discharge of stock effluent. A recently constructed stock feed pad and effluent infrastructure required an investment of upwards of \$360,000. Almost every farmer in the district is faced with obtaining resource consents for taking bore water. An expense their forebears never had to worry about.

Your Council has faced up to the challenges of stimulating economic growth and providing opportunity for our residents. The investments in Dairy Push, the Trade Training Centre, the River Trails and the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre are examples of helping to achieve our vision of a safe, vibrant and sustainable community.

An area readily seen by all is our roading infrastructure. Councillors recently attended a presentation from our roading and Downers staff. There are many vagaries when upgrading roads that can result in re-work. Over the past three years over 15 kilometres of district roads have been upgraded at a cost of \$3.7 million. Re-work to repair faults has cost Council less than \$12,000. One of many examples where your Council staff are doing a great job.

Wishing you and yours a safe and enjoyable time during the summer holidays. If driving, do so to the conditions to help ensure you arrive at your destination.

Councillor Column

Adrienne Bell

Over the last couple of months I have attended some great functions such as Pride in Putaruru's highly successful Business Awards, an exhibition opening at Tirau's Art on Main, the opening of Putaruru's Courthouse Gallery and Gifts and a Rotary dinner at our wonderful Plaza to raise funds for Putaruru's St John's Ambulance service. These are just some of the groups and businesses that work to make Putaruru the vibrant community that it is. Times are tough and many are struggling, but it's a sense of community that helps us get through these times.

Over the past 12 months we have had a large number of workshops at Council; one topic being the clean-up of the Waikato River. We have worked closely with both Raukawa and Te Arawa representatives to find ways of complying with new environmental standards set by the Government.

The South Waikato Achievement Centre decided last year that they would not continue with the collection of kerbside recycling and we are now in discussions with the new contractor to iron out the inevitable teething problems. For some the bins are too large - for others they are too small. Extra bins can be obtained by phoning council - as can smaller ones for those that want them. Health & Safety regulations dictate that contractors don't pick up loose materials.

It was great to see such a large number of apprentices receiving their certificates this week. These were presented by Mayor Neil Sinclair and industry/education sector leaders at a Council ceremony held in our new South Waikato Sport and Events Centre function room.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and all the very best for the New Year.

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