

UV system for Putaruru headworks

Council has received partial funding from the Ministry of Health for ultra violet disinfection at the Waihou water-take. The installation of this unit is required by legislation as part of the Drinking Water Standards NZ.

The project requires changes to the existing pump shed and pipe work at the Blue Spring. The pump shed will be extended in size to

accommodate the new unit and the water pipes will also need to be extended.

While we do the upgrade, there will be a small amount of earth works at the site. These earth works will be conducted in accordance with the resource consent.

Council is required to install disinfection at the facility to adhere to the new standards.

The whole project costs \$294,175, with subsidised funding of 60%, saving ratepayers \$176,505. Work will take four months to complete.

Council would like to take this opportunity to apologise for any inconvenience the work may cause. We expect no impact on water quality during the process.



Restricted fire season

The current fire danger in the South Waikato is high. With our hot summer weather showing no signs of letting up, this dry windy weather could climb up to extreme.

Council would like to remind farmers and members of the public to take extreme care when lighting fires in the rural areas. Fire permits are required for all outdoor fires; and will be issued after an assessment indicates it is safe to do so and all of the permit conditions are met.

Some sensible advice:

1. Don't use chainsaws and piston driven power tools during the hottest part of the day.
2. Avoid welding or grinding in areas of long grass.
3. Don't use naked flames in the open air.
4. Stub out cigarettes properly.
5. Check your hangi pit, burn pit or other area used earlier for a fire to ensure that it is completely out and not smouldering.

IN brief

- Council's road marking contractor has completed the summer remark, and will return in May to do the winter remark.
- Seven fatalities from two crashes in our district brought our excellent road safety record to an end.
- Over November/December last year Council carried out a Give Way campaign to gauge the public's understanding of the new give way rules. Of the 142 entries, only 46% had all seven questions answered correctly.

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IN house

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

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Improvements made at the Tokoroa Wastewater Treatment Plant

Council has made a significant improvement to the Tokoroa Wastewater Treatment Plant by installing a centrifuge to improve the handling of the district's wastewater bio-solids (which is the technical term for our household waste).

Every so often Council has to reapply for resource consent from the Waikato Regional Council for a number of our activities, such as landfill, water supply and wastewater. In order to satisfy the new resource consent for wastewater discharge we needed to make several improvements.

"Technology changes over time, and there is increasing pressure to improve the environmental impact of activities like wastewater plants," said Andrew Pascoe, Council's Services Manager. "Our resource consent conditions are amended accordingly and this improvement was necessary to satisfy these new requirements."

Purchasing various pieces of equipment over the past year and pulling it all together was challenging, taking several months to get all the components connected and working. At the time of writing, the system has been running for a week with good results.

Bio-solids (or sludge) from the treatment plant are now processed by the centrifuge system that mechanically removes moisture from the biosolids. Previously the bio-solids (sludge) were fed into drying beds where the moisture either evaporated or seeped into the ground.

The solid portion of this material is trucked to the landfill where it is stockpiled, combined with top soil and used to cap cells

at the landfill. The liquid that is removed is returned to the wastewater treatment plant for treatment.

1. This is the tank where the bio-solids are mixed together to form a consistent product.
2. Polymer powder is mixed with water in a concentration calculated from the moisture content of the raw product.
3. The bio-solids are piped into the centrifuge. Here it is mixed with the polymer and the moisture is mechanically removed from the biosolids through high speed rotation. The polymer helps bind the bio-solids (sludge).
4. This shows a close up of the liquid waste that is removed from the solid waste and

returned to the waste water treatment plant inlet for further treatment.

5. This part of the system is the bio-filter which was built to capture the odour from the process. The bio-filter is filled with wood chips (or bark) and kept moist. It has a sensor to ensure the sprinklers don't come on when it is raining. In this way the system maintains the optimum moisture content. This part of the system was included in the project due to the proximity of the waste water treatment plant to residential properties.
6. These are the old drying beds where waste material previously evaporated and seeped away.



Talking safety with our Police



The crime statistics for both Tokoroa and Putaruru are looking really good for the past six months. To date we have decreased by 10% and 30% respectively over the previous financial year. These results reflect continued hard work by all of us in the South Waikato community. Well done and thank you.

Alcohol use always increases over the summer season, between the heat, family social occasions and friendly gatherings. A few drinks is not necessarily a problem. The problem is what we do with it. Do we drink knowing we're going to regret it? Do we sit back and watch families and friends destroy themselves? Or do we stand up and say something?

They say only an idiot does the same thing over and over again, expecting a different outcome. Don't be an idiot, drink safe and be safe, always.

We would be remiss not to mention the tragic road accidents that occurred on our roads in late December. Lives can change and end so quickly. Please be alert on our roads at all times, death can come in an instant.

- Don't drive drunk.
- Don't drive tired.
- Don't text while driving.

While the South Waikato tends to be fairly quiet at this time of year as families head off on holiday and there is a general lull in criminal activity, sadly the instances of family violence remains high and are a concern to us.

If the police have one request, it is to take stock and think about your own family situation. What if things go wrong? Who can help in times of crisis? There are many social services out there that can, and do, offer valuable assistance.

What a load of old... legislation?

Mayor Neil Sinclair talks about Central Government, Local Government and legislation. Local Government is a creature of Statute. We are established and empowered by legislation. This means that Local Government, that's Councils like ours, can be and have been dramatically changed, restructured and reshaped by Central Government through legislative change. It has happened on several occasions over several decades. The most recent being the latest Local Government Reform Act.

The power to act

Some of the powers of Local Government through Acts and National Standards are prescriptive and don't allow any discretion by Council. We are simply the authority that implements the legislation. These powers are best described as 'delegated powers'.

There are other powers granted to Council that give us substantial discretion and autonomy on how they are exercised.

Accountability

Councils must answer for their actions not only to their local community, but also to Central Government and sometimes directly to the Minister of Local Government.

There are 41 Acts of Parliament that our Council must abide by. A few examples are the Local Government Act 1974, Food Act 1981, Gambling Act 2003, Litter Act 1979, Land Transport Act 1998, Waste Minimisation Act 2008; among many others.

And there are a further 13 secondary pieces of legislation that we adhere to as well. These include Food and Hygiene Regulations, Camping Grounds Regulations; and the National Environmental Standards (NES) for Air Quality 2004.

The Clean Air issue

The NES for Air Quality 2004 is a hot topic in our community at the moment; and indeed for Council too.

This specific piece of legislation sets out 14 standards. The NES prohibits certain activities that discharge significant quantities of atmospheric toxins (PM_{10.5}). And our Council HAS to work towards achieving the new legislation, because it is our role to do so.

New national standards required by Central Government often mean Councils need to put additional regulations to reflect the new standards in place.

The NES for air quality affects the kind of wood burners people can use to heat their homes, which may require individuals to upgrade their burner to what is referred to as a new energy efficient woodburner.

Individuals and businesses often see this as a new and imposing regulatory intervention by Council, without realising the directive comes from legislation imposed by Central Government.

Contrary to what people may think, almost all regulations made or administered by this Council are undertaken on the direction of Central Government and are necessary for carrying out our duty under the 41 Acts of Parliament and 13 additional pieces of legislation.

Dog owners may remember the considerable distress over micro-chipping dogs, several years ago. Again this is a good example of new legislation handed down from Central Government to us for Council to administer, enact and enforce. We may also recall that now the change has bedded down, micro-chipping dogs is something we all just do. Sometimes it is process of change that is the hard part.

One of the ways we as a Council can work towards meeting these requirements, as we are legislated to do, is through the introduction of a bylaw.

We need to remember that these requirements often come with set time frames for compliance which places additional pressure on Council and the community to meet the standards imposed.

So that is the history behind the introduction of the proposed Clean Air Bylaw, that was recently consulted on.

This has created a huge amount of debate within the community. Council is very conscious of the feelings expressed by our people; however we do have a job to do as well.

We have spent eight years investing in education, promotion and incentive schemes; but the air quality in our air sheds, especially Tokoroa, still has substantial improvements to make. We simply have to try other avenues to make improvements so that we can meet our legislative requirements.

But hang on, don't get us wrong, yes we have legislative deadlines breathing down our neck, but we also have to ask ourselves, is meeting these standards the only important thing? Is it even the most important thing?

While we take our responsibility towards achieving legislation very seriously and we are very conscious of the change and costs involved for our community; we do need to remember that poor air quality has a terrible effect on our health. And if we don't make improvements it will have a negative effect on our ability to accept new industry and grow our district's economic development.

We need to use the right wood burners and we need to use them correctly; while recognising our timber heritage.

We as a Council have put out a draft bylaw. We are open to innovative ideas on how to implement the NES imposed upon us; while retaining a link with our heritage and keeping our community happy.



Camp out



Taking a break and getting away from it all can be as simple as taking a tent and scooting around the corner; or at least it is in this district.

Amongst the 248 hectares of reserves throughout the South Waikato are five picturesque camping grounds. Camping for the first couple of nights is free, though a longer holiday requires a permit.*

All of the campgrounds have toilets and potable water; and are on the Waikato River Trails – so you set off for an evening

stroll or a day's cycling from your tent. And four of these campgrounds are on the banks of the Waikato River providing swimming, boating and fishing* on the doorstep.

Jones Landing, west of Arapuni, is sheltered, scenic and the most popular campground for families. Catching the full afternoon sun, it sits below an outcrop of ignimbrite cliffs. It provides safe swimming (with a little island with a variety of diving heights) and easy access to the wide expanse of the

Arapuni Dam for skiers and wakeboarders or bushclad-river for fishermen and kayakers. A boat ramp, jetty and playground are part of the facilities, and a 30 minute stroll up to the lookout at sunset is spectacular.

Popular for similar reasons is the Whakamaru Reserve, and a little further upstream towards Atiamuri, is the quieter Dunham's Point campsite. Both are set amongst the shade of pines and provide easy access to the river and trails.

Preferred by the motorhome fraternity is Little Waipa Reserve, 20kms from Tirau, and landscaped in the 1960s with European specimen trees. Sited on the confluence of the Waipa Stream, the reserve is a popular base for kayaking and in the evening, you can sit and watch the fish feeding from your caravan step.

Tirau resident Ann Clothier said camping at Little Waipa Reserve was really relaxing, even though it is only five minutes from her home.



Left: Relaxing as the sun goes down at Jones Landing.

Below left: The shallow waters of Jones Landing provide safe swimming for all ages.

Below right: Jones Landing is a popular camping site over the summer months for both locals and visitors alike.





"I can pop home to get something or feed the animals, but staying here by the Lake and playing on the kayaks is a whole world away."

Quieter and more secluded is the bush campground at Jim Barnett Reserve near Waotu.

There the roar of passing waterskiers and laughter of children is replaced by the gentle whoosh of flying wood pigeons and the chittering of the birds.

Provided by the Barnett family in honour of their grandfather

who farmed and milled that area, the 17.4 hectare reserve contains numerous walking tracks, many labelled plants and an extensive population of birds.

Caravan and motorhome parking is near the entrance, but for those keen to pack it in, a small camping area is provided at the rear of the reserve – approximately 20 minutes walk through native bush.

This stand of bush survived the large Taupo eruption of 186AD and a huge old totara, full of epiphytes (flax-like plants growing

on the branches) even escaped the loggers – probably due to it's many branches. The tramways carved from the earth to transport the logs to the mill are still clearly visible in the reserve.

Another tree of interest is what must be one of the oldest pines in the district, probably 80 to 100 years old, also covered in epiphytes.

The Forest and Bird Society have replanted much of the pasture area and done extensive pest control. The resulting prolific bird population flit across the road to the one hectare Walter Barnett Reserve or over the fence into the covenanted six hectare of neighbouring bush.

Whether you want a peaceful respite amongst virgin forest or an active play in the water – take a tent and head around the corner to enjoy the South Waikato and all it has to offer.



Left: The bush in the Jim Barnett Reserve dates back to before the Taupo eruption.

Below left: The huge old Totara in Jim Barnett Reserve.

Below right: Some of the new bush in Jim Barnett reserve is labelled.



Camping in the South Waikato

- Camping permits cost \$35 for 28 nights camping over a three-month period. They can be purchased from SWDC or i-Sites. The permit includes five rubbish bags (and collection December to February).
- No open fires are permitted.
- Fishing requires a license which can be obtained from the i-Sites.



Neighbourhood Parties build healthy communities



The 'Our Neighbourhood Parties' were introduced in Tokoroa as a pilot in 2012 by Council and Sport Waikato as a joint venture.

The purpose of the parties was to provide an opportunity for neighbours to meet, while using local Council parks and reserves. The intention was also to promote community spirit, meet local organisations, and families to enjoy some old fashioned games and have some fun. Participation from both the local community and community support organisations has been tremendous. The parties proved a real community event with a sausage sizzle, bouncy castle and good old fashioned games like sack race, tug of war, egg and spoon race; and a great deal of neighbourly chatting.

The parties go back to basics! Face to face chatting and no electronic games!

In 2012 the parties were so successful and the feedback so very encouraging, it was decided that during the summer months of 2012/2013 Council would extend the programme to Arapuni and Putaruru.

Three parties have been held; at Inman Reserve and John Street Reserve in Tokoroa and Pioneer Crescent in Arapuni. There are three more parties planned, so if one comes to your neighbourhood, come along and join in the fun.

- 15 February - Barnett Reserve, Putaruru
- 1 March - Stanly Street Park, Tokoroa
- 15 March - St Mary's Sportfield, Putaruru



Burning better this winter starts in summer

There has been a lot of talk recently about Air Quality and the proposed Clean Air Bylaw that was consulted on late last year*.

One of the key problems is how we use our woodburners, not just the age or quality of the woodburners themselves.

When we're experiencing our hot summer months, it is difficult to think about the cold of winter; but preparing for winter NEEDS to be done in (spring) and summer.

Here's some key tips:

- Burn DRY SEASONED wood not WET GREEN wood. You should have already collected your wood for this 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 up into suitable size pieces 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!*

**The hearings for the Clean Air Bylaw are scheduled for 26, 27 and 28 February. The hearings are open to the public. Council received 76 submissions on the proposed bylaw and 28 people wish to speak at the hearings.*



Councillor Column

Warren Lee

As a district the South Waikato has not previously discovered its potential as a tourist destination. However, we have recently begun to look at ourselves through different eyes and discovered that we do have a lot to offer travellers and tourists.

This has become more obvious with the completion of the Waikato River Trails and the number of small businesses, cafes and homestays that are now operating in our district to cater for the over 20,000 visitors that used the trails last year. The positive economic spinoff and improved employment opportunities are very pleasing to see.

The Taniwha, a multisport event in which I participated was a great way to showcase our district. It attracted over 800 walkers, runners and cyclists from around the North Island in its inaugural year. This is set to become an annual event on the calendar and preparations are already underway for this year's event on 9 November 2013. You can visit the website for more details at www.thetaniwha.co.nz. The South Waikato Sport and Events Centre was the hub for all activities surrounding the event with a prize-giving and an evening dinner completing the day.

However, this has just been the beginning of what we can achieve if we try. A special committee has been formed in recent weeks to bring together and develop our current tourism assets and to look for new opportunities. We have for the past 12 months been working closely with Hamilton & Waikato Tourism as part of a united group of Waikato district representatives to ensure that we are sharing the opportunities to attract more visitors to our district.

The sweet smell of success



The sweet smell of success is the only odour coming from the South Waikato Indoor Pools since Christmas, following the installation of a new ultra-violet filtering system.

"The strong smell of chlorine has long been an issue for swimmers and users of the pools," said Richard Gaby, Council's Pools Manager. "Council has responded to this feedback by installing a new type of filtration in the form of the ultra-violet system."

This has not only dramatically reduced the chlorine smell, but has improved water quality and enjoyment by our users.



Nick Plaistow, who swims daily, has noticed a big difference. "The chlorine smell on my togs is a lot less noticeable since the system was installed."

Lorna Kay, another frequent user agrees with Nick about the improvement saying, "I haven't noticed any smell of chlorine in the air anymore."

And as for the pool staff? They are ecstatic about their new chlorine-smell free environment!

So what are you waiting for? Head down to the South Waikato Indoor Pools and breathe in the new fresh chlorine-free smell.

What's available at the Indoor Pools? The team has something for everyone. Several classes are held at different times, just contact the team at the pools on 885 0739 to find a time that suits you.

Water Woggles

Exercise in water has a major benefit in that it is low to nil impact on bones, joints and bodies. This makes it an ideal start to a get fit programme for people who are carrying a few extra kilos; as opposed to starting with running or even walking that could place undue stress on joints. And you don't even have to be able to swim, as all movements incorporate floatation devices. As we get older we also need to focus on resistance work to strengthen joints and improve bone density; woggling does this. It is a fun way to exercise in a group, meet new people and make new friends.

Lane Swimming

Swimming is what is referred to as 'forced breathing exercise' and is an excellent way to strengthen your lungs and build both capacity and stamina. Swimming is one of the best forms of overall body fitness as it uses all muscle groups.

Learn to Swim

Learning to swim in a safe risk free environment with experienced trainers is a must for every young child. Swimming is fun; but can also be dangerous unless children are confident in the water and know how to swim basic strokes. Learning how to float properly and swim is an essential life skill that is taught in fun 20 minute sessions by the friendly pool staff over a period of weeks.

Toddlers Tadpoles

This programme is basically the pre-cursor to the Learn to Swim programme. It builds water confidence in toddlers in preparation for learning to swim properly.

Swim Academy

Once children have the basics, it's on to Swim Academy where they can improve their technique in terms of strokes, kicking, breathing and body position in the water. Attending Swim Academy on a regular basis also helps improve endurance, distance and fitness.

What's on at The Plaza?

... by Plaza Manager, Nicola Warrington

Happy New Year!

Thank you for supporting the South Waikato Arts Centre – The Plaza Theatre. On behalf of the South Waikato Arts Trust, we look forward to providing wonderful arts, community events and entertainment to you in 2013. We wish you peace, happiness, and abundant good health in the New Year.

2012 has been an incredibly busy year for The Plaza. With events including and to name just a few; concert pianist Michael Houstoun, New Zealand's favourite melodic rock band The Feelers with support from Annah Mac and All Of A Kind, Fashion Shows from Glenshea Kindergarten and St. Mary's School, Fundraisers for the Fire Brigade and St. John, Opera with Lyrica and Opera Brava, Dance Exams with Diane Willcox, the South Waikato Dance Festival and Aspire Arts Academy, educational workshops and Leadership Training Courses, Surplus Broker Auctions, World percussion from virtuoso Mundi, and the greatest troupe of it's kind around the globe; Les Ballet's Eloelle – Men in Tutus which, if you missed out, was an absolute scream!

The Plaza continues to flourish with continuous community groups and events. Mah-jong, the Putaruru 50+ Group, Indoor Bowls, Women's Institute, South Waikato Grey Power Meetings and Zumba® Fitness and Zumba® Toning. We look forward to new regular users in 2013.

The bookings for 2013 are filling up fast with events including the Funky Monkeys, Kids For Kids and the Royal New Zealand Ballet. An incredible assortment of theatrical and musical entertainment is in the pipeline, so make sure you keep up to date with the Plaza Facebook page: www.facebook.com/theplazaputaruru.



IN brief continued...

- Contractors are making good progress on the Arapuni Road re-alignment. Earthworks are well in hand. Traffic was detoured along Old Taupo, Shine and Pearson roads while earthworks continued along the old road. Traffic flow has resumed along the new road, at reduced speed for the duration of the project.
- The speed indication device was deployed to Mossop Road in Tokoroa. The average speed was 58km/h with a maximum of 120km/h being recorded. Unfortunately 49% of vehicles were travelling over the 60km/h speed limit.
- Complaints about the new recycling contractor are declining after a shaky start to the system. Recycling efforts and volumes by our community have increased due to the new Council supplied recycling crates introduced six months ago. This added to the recycling collection/change of contractor issues. So recycling volumes are increasing - keep it up South Waikato!
- The Putaruru recycling centre has seen an increase in fly-tipping (dumping). This material is being sifted for identifiable material. Culprits will be sent infringement fines.
- More than 180 local students participated in the Youth Council's School of Zen event. This popular annual event is an activity based fun filled day to encourage sportsmanship and communication between schools while supporting the transition of intermediate students to local high schools. Feedback from the students at participating schools was again very favourable.
- Public toilet usage over the Christmas period (21 December to 11 January) doubled: Arapuni (850 visits), Putaruru Main Street (4,260 visits) and Tokoroa Dunham Park (3,700 visits).
- Sports leagues will be starting at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre in February. Netball, run by the Tokoroa Netball Centre, will start Tuesday 12 February, Volleyball begins on Wednesday 13 February and Basketball on Thursday 14 February. Play starts at 6pm each evening and will run for nine weeks. Registration forms are available from the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre. You can phone 885 1059 or download one from the website www.southwaikato.govt.nz.
- The firemain is being replaced in Roslin Street from opposite the Council Office to Swanston Street and then down Swanston Street on the southern side to the intersection of Mannering and Swanston. All the work will take place in the sidewalk. A 150mm diameter firemain will be installed along a length of 360m, using directional drilling to prevent as much disruption to the public as possible. The work has already started and will be complete by the end of March.
- Six of the large oak street trees in Bridge Street in Tokoroa will

be removed in the next couple of months due to ill health. They are nearing the end of their life; and could soon become unsafe. This work will be conducted in stages, more than likely over the weekends over the coming months. Road closure will be necessary. Firm details will be publicised once finalised. Council is looking into alternative planting options.

- Staff are currently reviewing necessary changes to the Heat Swap programme as a result of changes to the level of Central Government support available. This will be presented to Council in due course.
- A recent Fraud Workshop was well supported by community organisations with 28 attendees.

IN the know

... There are 41 Acts of parliament that Council must abide by. And a further 13 secondary pieces of Legislation. That's a lot of red tape!

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.

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