



A bi-monthly newsletter from your local Council - Issue 20 - January/February 2015

Long Term Plan - coming soon

The range of Council activities, services, projects and assets is wide and varied. We regulate dogs, manage landfills, maintain roads, provide libraries, support economic development, hold events... and much much more...

In order to do all of this as efficiently and effectively as possible we have to plan. One of our main plans is the Long Term Plan (LTP) which looks out 10 years at what projects we are doing, the costs and how we're going to pay for them.

Council needs to make sure that we are financially responsible and that we future-proof our assets and services.

We have to balance affordability with the need to grow and enhance our district, facilities and services. We consider demographics, the economy, legislative requirements, amongst many other factors.

It is also our job to look at the strategic issues facing the district. These include but are not limited to:

- Declining population, aging population and fewer jobs - how do we stimulate economic development, continue to afford services with a declining ratepayer base and cater for an aging community?

- Council focus - there are several activities and services that we are legislated to do, such as animal control, environmental health, waste management and others but there are also a large number of activities and services that we are expected to do, services that provide leisure, social and cultural richness to our community. What should we do? What shouldn't we do?

- Land use and water quality - both regionally and nationally there are concerns over the availability of water. In some areas of the district, water is 'fully allocated', making it increasingly difficult for new forestry to dairy farm conversions to happen and for businesses that use a lot of water to establish in our district; and ever-increasing costs and issues with water quality compounds this. Should we play a more proactive role in the field of water allocation and quality?

The Long Term Plan

Council reviews its LTP every three years. The 2015-25 LTP is a long document and contains detailed budgets for the next 10 years. To make it easier for our community we are also producing a shorter consultation document that includes our

strategic direction, key projects and changes and asks questions we want your feedback on.

The LTP will be available for consultation from 18 March to 20 April. Any person or organisation can make a submission telling Council what they would like to see for the district for the next 10 years.

Copies of the full plan and consultation document will be available at the Council offices, all libraries, the SW Indoor Pool and the Sport and Events Centre. They will also be available on our website: www.southwaikato.govt.nz - click on the Our Council

tab - then the Consultation tab.

Submission forms will be enclosed in both documents and there will be an online submission form on our website www.southwaikato.govt.nz.

You can contact our Strategic Policy Planner on 0800 DRAFTS (0800 372 387), get in touch with your local Councillor or phone Council on 07 885 0340.

We will also be holding public meetings across the district. The details are below in the block. All public meetings will start at 7pm.

Below: Staff and Councillors go through budgets virtually line by line!



Date	Town	Venue
Monday 23 March	Tokoroa	SW Sport & Events Centre
Wednesday 25 March	Tirau	Tirau Hall
Thursday 26 March	Putāruru	The Plaza
Monday 30 March	Arapuni	Arapuni Hall
Tuesday 31 March	Atiamuri	Upper Atiamuri Hall

IN brief

- The South Waikato District is now in extreme fire danger. All rural fire permits have been suspended and no more will be issued until we get a change of weather. If you see an unattended fire please call 111 and report it.
- Charlie the Elf entertained around 200 children, teachers and parents at the Tokoroa Library in December.
- 80% of students graduating from the Trade Training Centre have secured employment.

IN side

- 2&3 Water restrictions Road/Rail Terminal
- 4&5 Bin in, don't block it! Funding secured
- 6&7 Social media update Environmental care
- 8 Councillor Columns Councillor contacts

IN house

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

Editorial: Communications staff, Kerry Fabrie and Sina Tolovae, 07 885 0340

Print: GASP Designs

Tokoroa welcomes a satellite Consul Service for Filipinos



Mayor Neil Sinclair and Deputy Mayor Jenny Shattock met with Ambassador Benavider at Council in January.

Tokoroa's Filipino community now has access to a mobile consulate service thanks to the efforts of Ambassador Virginia Benavider from the Embassy of the Philippines.

Mayor Neil Sinclair and Ambassador Benavider met and spoke at a North Island Filipino Farm Workers Association meeting towards the end of last year. Ambassador Benavider later visited Tokoroa. The Embassy has been establishing satellite units around the country to provide services like passports, immigration, visas etc.

"Ambassador Benavider was very keen on Tokoroa because of its central position and excellent links," said Mayor Sinclair. "Ms Benavider also expressed interest in investment opportunities and as a district we welcome that."

The satellite unit is located near St Pius' Church from 9am to 9pm. Over 200 clients have attended to date.

Water restrictions need your support

NOW SHOWING!

Could it be any hotter?! Once again, the hot summer conditions have triggered district urban water restrictions. At the time of going to print (end January) we are at Water Alert Level 1 which means that sprinkler systems for watering your garden must only be used between 6am and 8am and again in the evening between 6pm and 8pm.

COMING SOON (perhaps)!

If the hot weather continues, we may have to lift to Water Alert Level 2 which is similar to Level 1, but watering by sprinkler is only permitted on every alternate day. Water Alert Level 3 means that home sprinkler systems are completely banned and watering should be done by hand only, every alternate day, again early morning and late evening. Water Alert Level 4 would mean a complete ban on non-essential outdoor watering. Watch the local newspaper South Waikato News for updates on this as we move through February.

You can help conserve water during this period:

- Fix leaking taps.
- Re-use boiled water to water your pot plants.
- Make sure you only use your dishwasher when it is full, don't wash half loads. Same goes for your washing machine.
- Capture the water from your washing machine and use it to water garden plants.
- Turn the tap off when brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Take shorter showers or install a low flow shower head.



Work starts on rail terminal

The first sod was turned at the rail terminal site on Monday 19 January, marking the start of work on the \$2.5 million project.

Mayor Neil Sinclair, Deputy Mayor Jenny Shattock, RJ Lincoln logistics owner Raymond Lincoln and manager Gavin O'Donoghue, and Downer contract manager Mark Watkins were all in attendance and excited about the project finally taking off.

"The South Waikato has a very central position in terms of transport, and we're in for some exciting times over the next two to three years. We believe this terminal will open up a lot of business and job opportunities for our district," commented Mayor Sinclair.

Already the site has begun to see some major changes with the first stages of the project being carried out.

"It's a fairly hilly landscape, so there's a reasonable amount

of earthworks to be done to bring the site down to level," commented Mr Watkins. "From there you'll begin to see the new road and rail terminal being formed."

The project is expected to be completed by the end of March but it is already attracting international business.

RJ Lincoln has just secured a deal with a RD1 supplier from Australia to have their product stored at the rail siding terminal site.

"We're thrilled about this, and grateful for the support from Council. We've had this idea in the pipeline for many years, and now the goal is to make it efficient and make it work for us and the South Waikato," said Mr Lincoln.

RJ Lincoln will be developing the land next to the rail siding terminal within a matter of weeks to create more storage sheds for future developments.



From left: Raymond Lincoln, Gavin O'Donoghue, Mayor Neil Sinclair, Deputy Mayor Jenny Shattock and Mark Watkins

Footpath upgrade programme

Over the last couple of months Council staff have conducted a rating survey of all footpaths in the urban areas and identified trip hazards and uneven surfaces.

- Footpaths with a lip greater than 25mm meet Council's specification for trip hazard footpaths and will be repaired.
- Footpaths with a lip of between 10mm - 25mm will be monitored by Council staff and repaired as needed.

Staff have identified 132 spots across the district where footpaths are a significant trip hazard with lips greater than 25mm. Eighteen of these are extremely hazardous and will be fixed urgently over the coming weeks. Specifically these are in the areas listed below:

Road name	House no	Road name	House no
Putāruru			
Cambridge Street	7	State Highway 1	
Philip Street	21		
Tokoroa			
Carrington Place	28	Baird Road	1
Browning Street	-	Currie Street	10
Grampian Street	29	Cramond Street	35
Balmoral Drive	135	Stirling Place	2
Glendevon Place	53	John Street	46
Kent Street	26	Karaka Place	1
East Parkdale	28	Hawick Street	23
Tainui Street	36		

Following the completion of these worst footpaths repairs we will begin work on all of the other problematic footpaths based on severity. Problem areas that are under the 25mm threshold will be repaired on a priority basis as funding becomes available over the coming two financial years.



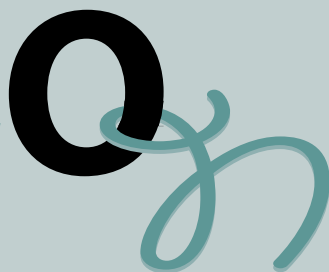
Footpath maintenance.



An example of 25mm plus lip.

What's

Mark your calendar

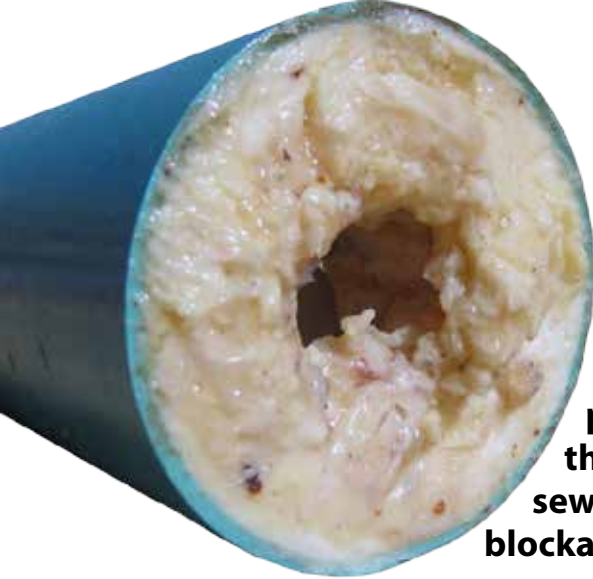


South Waikato Supersports
20, 21 and 22 February 2015

Our Neighbourhood parties
Games, fun, sausage sizzle, entertainment and more at the Our Neighbourhood parties, from 5.30pm to 7pm:
18 Feb - Kauri Street Reserve, Tokoroa
25 Feb - Glenkill Street Reserve, Tokoroa
4 March, Village Green, Arapuni
11 March - Village Green, Tirau

Putaruru Waterfest/A&P show
21 February, Glenshea Park in Putaruru
Come along and enjoy the day - stalls, fun pool events, rides and the last Putaruru A&P Show.

Children's Day
Sunday 1 March at the South Waikato Indoor Pools and Youth Park.



Bin it, don't block it!

How you can help prevent those nasty sewer pipe blockages...

Drain blockages are a stinky, messy, expensive and often avoidable problem.

It can be easy to think once something disappears down your drain that's the end of it. But our sewer pipes are only meant to deal with certain waste and anything foreign going down your drain could result in a blockage.

Most urban properties in the South Waikato are connected to Council's wastewater system and everyone benefits from wastewater collection and treatment services. While the service provides predominately private benefits, the community at large benefits from the elimination of health risks arising from open sewers and inadequate septic tank facilities. Environmentally sound treatment services reduce the adverse impact on receiving waterways. This improves the environment downstream from the

treatment plants and benefits property owners in the adjacent rural areas within and beyond the district boundaries.

Each financial year Council allows for 16 drain blockages throughout the district. We have already had 11 blockages this year.

If we know what can and can't go down the drain, then we can all help minimise the number of blockages we have and save Council, and ultimately the ratepayer a lot of money!

So, what shouldn't you put down your drain?

The main cause of drain blockages are oils, grease and fats. When poured down the drain as a liquid, it will eventually solidify in the drain pipe and likely cause a blockage. This is particularly a problem in the winter months, and with the pipes in the district that run at flat grades.

Instead of pouring your used oils and fats down the drain, pour them into a container and put it in the bin. (*Small amounts of oil and fats from cooking*)

a small meal shouldn't be a problem, but litres of oil from deep frying is not good!

Another major cause are used nappies, baby/bathroom wipes and sanitary products. Unlike toilet paper, moist toilettes and toiletries do not break down fast enough to be processed by our drains. These need to be thrown in the bin, along with nappies and other sanitary products. (*Compostable wipes/nappies and sanitary products are available from some supermarkets.*)

Paints, varnishes, paint thinners, weed killers and chemicals should also not be poured down the drain. Council has a biological process to treat our wastewater and though these products should not cause a blockage, they could kill the bugs that are treating the wastewater. (*Motor oil, paints and chemicals in small amounts (non-commercial) can be disposed of at the waste disposal sites.*)

Another problem area is trees being planted over the sewer lines, tree roots grow into the pipes when they are looking for moisture and can cause blockages as well as breakages.

Homeowners are responsible for maintaining their sewer laterals (*the pipe connecting to Council's main sewer pipe, shown in red below*). If this pipe gets blocked it is the home owners responsibility to unblock it. Council is responsible for the blue pipes.

Next time you're wondering if something should go down the drain, just think to yourself, "**Dirty water only. Bin it, don't block it!**"

What can & can't go down the drain?

No cooking oils, fats or grease!



No nappies, wipes or sanitary products!



No paint, varnishes, paint thinners, weed killers and chemicals!



Keep trees clear of the sewer lines so their roots don't grow into the pipes.



The only thing that should be going down your drain is dirty water. Remember - bin it, don't block it!

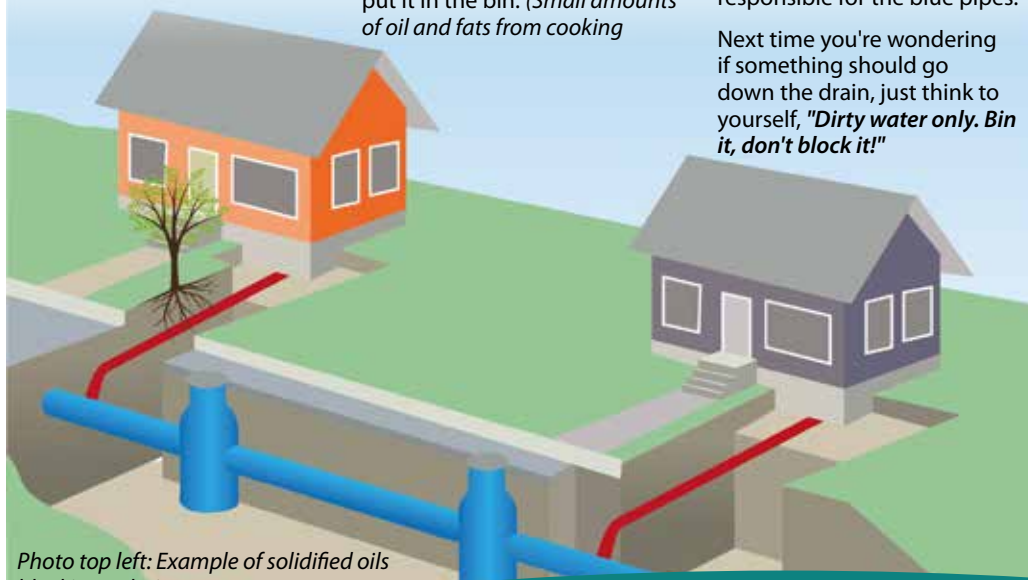
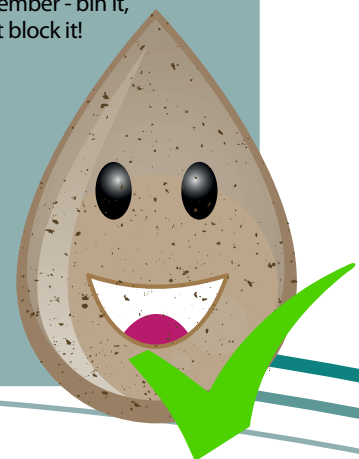


Photo top left: Example of solidified oils blocking a drain.

SWEI receives extra funding

Council has secured \$69,297.31 worth of funding from the Waikato River Authority (WRA) to go towards 15 environmental projects in the South Waikato. The application was put together by Council on behalf of 14 individual applicants who had applied to the South Waikato Environment Initiatives (SWEI).

The SWEI is an independent group of mostly local farmers who administrate funds from the Carter Holt Harvey Pulp and Paper Mill (CHH) with the assistance of Council. When possible Council looks for funding elsewhere so that we can keep making improvements to our district without burdening the ratepayer with extra costs.

The projects that are being funded include planting of wetland areas and the riparian margins of streams, to assist in nutrient filtration and sediment control to enhance biodiversity in our district.

"The applicants are under no obligation to enhance biodiversity on their property, so it's great to see so many farmers willing to undertake such projects. Even though most of the costs are covered by funding, a sufficient amount of money and time comes out of the applicants pocket as well," commented Council's Environmental Monitoring Officer and SWEI committee representative, James Piddock.

SWEI fund 25 per cent of the projects and the WRA funds the remaining 75 per cent, with some of these costs being covered by co-funding from outside organisations and individuals.

"Without the support of the WRA, these projects wouldn't have all been able to go ahead. So we're very pleased to have received this funding. It means the SWEI can make the CHH funds go further and we can continue to support and grow relationships with South Waikato landowners."

The total cost of all 15 projects is estimated at \$145,000. Council will put in extra funding to projects that are deemed Significant Natural Areas (SNA).

Work is likely to begin in the planting season, and an estimated 5,850 trees will be planted through the projects.

Remarkable progress has been made locally over the last few years through the work of SWEI. Many kilometres of stream-side fencing have been erected, and thousands of native trees planted to protect the banks and keep the water cool. The South Waikato can feel proud.

If you're interested in taking on such projects on your property in the 2016 year and you're in the Waikato catchment, please get in contact with James Piddock at james.piddock@southwaikato.govt.nz.



Improving local roads

The Okoroire/Hetherington Road intersection upgrade and safety improvement project is currently under way. The intersection is well used and offers an alternative route for State Highway 1. It also provides a route for oversized heavy vehicle through the district that cannot use the State Highways due to height restriction. The intersection will be relocated to the east improving visibility. Once complete, Council will also progress an extension to the Tirau Cemetery.

Stage 1 earthworks began prior to Christmas and will have little impact on traffic. Once the new road is built, stage 2 will start on the existing road. This will involve cutting down Okoroire Road by 1.2m which will improve visibility as you drive past the cemetery and approach the new intersection location. Stage 2 of the project will cause traffic delays and the public is encouraged to use an alternative route where possible. Stage 2 will start in late February and Council will update our community through its Facebook page.

Talking safety with our Police



Reducing burglaries can be as simple as locking your doors and not leaving windows open; simple quick steps that you can take.

This is especially hard to do with the hot weather we have been having. Perhaps the installation of window latches and or a security door would be of benefit on these hot days and nights?

Security lights around backdoors, carports and garages are always really helpful and they are a great deterrent to opportunist thieves.

Sometimes people may have information about a crime in their neighbourhood but they don't want to speak to the Police directly. CrimeStoppers' confidential crime line is available toll free on 0800 555111.

The SNAP (Serial Number Action Partnership) initiative enables you to record serial numbers and other unique identifying details of your valuable goods. Details are securely stored in an electronic database from where they can be quickly and easily retrieved by owners to give to Police if property is lost or stolen. This assists recovery of stolen goods and identifying of burglars and thieves. For more information and to register your goods, visit www.SNAP.org.nz



Crime can't survive in communities that care and the Police can't act on something we don't know about. If you suspect something, RING 111.

If it looks suspicious it most likely is.

Remember: "If in doubt - give the Police a shout."



The Plaza Theatre is regularly used for social meetings and seminars. If your organisation is looking for a new meeting venue, pop down to the Plaza and have a look around. Contact Catherine on 883 8596 Monday to Friday from 9am – 2:30pm.

Our regular users – Mahjong, Putaruru Over 50s Group, Indoor Bowls, Women's Institute, South Waikato Country Music and the South Waikato Music Society always welcome new members. If you would like to meet new people and join with any of the above groups, contact details can be provided - just call The Plaza.

Movie screenings have been very successful and we will continue to show movies during 2015.

First for the year will be Sunday 22 February 2015 at 2pm where we will be screening 'The Blind Side' based on the true story of Michael Oher, a homeless and traumatised boy who became an All American Football Player thanks to the care of a woman and her family. Outstanding Performances from Sandra Bullock, Kathy Bates and Quinton Aaron in his first lead role as Michael Oher.

If there is a movie you missed and would like to see on the big screen, do call The Plaza and they will endeavour to show it. Admission Prices remain the same: \$8 Adult \$5 Children.

The South Waikato Music Society's first concert for 2015 is on Sunday 15 March, at 2.30pm and features the NZ Chamber Soloists, who are the resident violin/cello/piano trio from the University of Waikato. Admission is \$30, students free.



Getting to know our staff....

Hi, my name is Sharon and I am the Regulatory Group Manager. This September will mark my 20th year working here. I joined the Council team in 1995 as the only resource management planner at the time, and one of my proudest achievements has been building the planning team to what it is today as well as being promoted within the organisation to Group Manager.

Within my current role, I look after 20 staff under the regulatory section, which includes Civil Defence/ Emergency, Rural Fire, Planning, Environmental Health, Liquor, Building, and Dog Control.

One of the toughest parts of the job is balancing the many and varied regulatory functions with what is best for the community, future landowners, neighbours, and applicants. Especially because many of the regulations we must adhere to and enforce are not locally chosen, Council staff care about the district and we are passionate about our jobs.

I was born and bred in Tokoroa and my husband and I are now raising our two boys here. I am proud of my community and love working and living in the South Waikato.

One of my favourite things about the district is the abundance of parks and playgrounds that children can enjoy. In my spare time I enjoy getting out and walking all the beautiful tracks we have in the South Waikato, a particular favourite of mine is Lake Moananui.



Hi my name is Craig Hobbs and I am Council's Chief Executive. My wife Lucy, son Michail and I moved into the district four months ago and we are loving it already. We're located in Arapuni Village, a lovely area with some very stunning scenery.

I began my role as Council's CE 19 months ago. It was a huge opportunity for me in terms of career development. I loved the idea of having the ability to make a real impact on the way people live in this great district, while running a complex organisation.

And Council is a very complex organisation. Every day is different and I have learnt so much about the functions of local government through the very talented staff.

Already in the 19 months I have been here I have witnessed and been a part of some great projects for the district. Including securing the Fonterra Development, a \$350 million dollar investment that will see 400 jobs created for the duration of the build and 50 permanent jobs for the district.

We live in a beautiful district with so many lakes, walkways and river trails to discover, but it's the strength of the community and all the fantastic people who do great things that make the South Waikato a brilliant place to work, live and play.

Facebook gives great feedback

Social media has become an effective means of communication for local government organisations, with over 75% of New Zealand councils using Facebook and other social media sites to interact with their communities. Our own Facebook page is almost two years old and what a couple of years it has been!

Council's Communications Team of Kerry Fabrie and Sina Tolovae manage the Facebook page (and Twitter account) and as we approach our second birthday we would like to thank our 'likes' out there for the tremendous level of engagement we receive, the questions we are asked, the comments and suggestions made and the number of shares that originate from our posts.

We believe our facebook page has led to improved engagement with our community and we love hearing from you - don't stop! We also believe that through our facebook page we have increased our community's level of understanding of what we do, how and why.

We have especially enjoyed hearing from people pointing out problems and

issues that we can get on to because our staff can't be everywhere all the time, so having our community let us know about over-flowing rubbish bins over the holiday period and dirty toilets means we can act on it. We have also enjoyed sharing the many good news stories that happen in our district with you; and hearing your good news stories in return.

As a thank you Communications staff held a Christmas holiday colouring-in competition. The entries were fantastic and deciding on winners difficult. Congratulations to the three age category winners, who each win a \$20 BookSellers voucher:

- Under 5 - Jono of Arapuni
- Aged 6 to 7 - Tavita of Tokoroa
- Over 8 - Kristian of Putaruru

If you don't yet 'like' us, feel free to do so:  www.facebook.com/southwaikatodistrictcouncil or follow us @SouthWaiaktoDC.



The winners are: Jono of Arapuni (age 5), Tavita of Tokoroa (age 6) and Kristian of Putaruru (age 10).

Get out there!

The best place to spend hot summer days is outside enjoying our beautiful district. And the choices are many.

Te Waihou

If you haven't yet walked Te Waihou you don't know what you are missing! The 4.7km walk (one way) ambles through farmland and native bush along the crystal clear waters of Te Waihou to the Blue Spring. Around 70% of New Zealand's bottled water is sourced from here, right on our doorstep. The Blue Spring itself is an iconic familiar image that is recognised far and wide. It's time to see it with your own eyes.

Waikato River Trails

These trails offer 100km of walking, running and cycling pleasure as they follow the Waikato River Trails from the Pokaiwhenua Bridge in the north to the Atiamuri Bridge in the south. Sections of trail can be accessed from multiple points along the river and meander through grassland, native bush, farmland and wetlands.

Jones Landing

This Council reserve on the banks of Lake Arapuni is a treat for paddle-boarding, kayaking, swimming and lazing in the sun. A tarzan swing on the small island close to shore is a popular spot for a yell, a whoop and a splash. It is a popular camping spot over summer for locals and visitors alike, with access to the Jones Landing to Arapuni section of the Waikato River Trails.

Jim Barnett

The Jim Barnett Reserve is a hidden gem. Located near Te Waotu, this small reserve has many walking tracks amidst majestic natural bush, with towering totara, rimu and tawa. Fantails follow in your footsteps taking advantage of the insects disturbed underfoot. If you enjoy peace, quiet and serene surroundings, pack your tent or camper for a night or two at Barnett Reserve.



**Get
out
there!**

Council cares about the Kōkako

Council has committed \$10,000 annually for the next 10 years towards the Kōkako Restoration project that is being led by the Department of Conservation.

The Mokaihaha Ecological Area is the largest surviving block of the extensive State Forests that once covered the Mamaku Plateau. It is located approximately 10km east of Tokoroa, encompassing the upper catchments of Pukerimu, Tikitiki, Mokaihaha and Onukutauria streams (and part of the Takapu-hurihuri Stream).

An area of about 850ha on the western side of the Mokaihaha Ecological Area that is home to a significant population of kōkako. The kōkako is endemic to New Zealand and is the only member of its family still surviving on the mainland.

There are fewer than 400 pairs occurring in isolated populations. The kōkako population at Mokaihaha is isolated and never been known to have dropped below 40 birds. It is ranked in the top three most important in the country in terms of genetics. Current numbers are however not known and there is a need for a census and monitoring of numbers; and ground and aerial pest control initiatives.

Census data will be collected in May this year; and numbers will be monitored in the coming years.

Council has a commitment to protecting biodiversity in the district, and clearly this is an important project that



The kōkako has a beautiful, clear song that carries for kilometres. It is a poor flier due to its short, rounded wings. It hops and leaps from branch to branch, not so much flying as gliding.

needs support. Our Council will continue to work with project partners, Department of Conservation, Department of Corrections, Raukawa, Hancock and Southern Pastures.

Ever wondered what to plant and where?

The Cercis family of six deciduous trees that range from three to six metres high to two to five metres wide are perfect for urban gardens. They provide all year round interest from small pea-shaped flowers on bare twigs and branches during spring, bright summer foliage, autumn colour and even decorative seed pods in the winter months.

They grow best in heaps of sunshine and fortunately for us in the South Waikato are frost tolerant. They grow happily in average garden conditions.

There are a number of varieties:

- Siliquastrum (Judas Tree) has coppery coloured leaves turning to matt green and bright purplish-rose flowers.
- Canadensis (Alba) is a small tree with broad rounded head and boasts clusters of pure white flowers in late spring to early summer.
- Forest Pansy is a small round headed tree. Its young stems and leaves are a deep wine red to dark purple and it has pale rose-pink flowers.
- Ruby Atkinson is a round headed medium tree with a horizontal branch pattern,

green heart-shaped leaves and pastel mauve pink flowers in early spring.

- Avondale (pictured, below left) is the dwarf of the species and has heart-shaped rich green leaves with deep cerise-pink flowers.
- Hearts of Gold (pictured, below) has large heart-shaped leaves that are golden bronze in spring, maturing to butter gold and then bright yellow/orange. The flowers are a pale rose-pink.

This family is certainly full of colour and will add vibrancy to any South Waikato garden.



Photos compliments of Leafland.



IN brief continued...

- The new recycling facility in Croad Place is open from 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 1pm on weekends (both days) and public holidays. This facility is manned by the helpful SW Achievement Centre staff.
- 2014 was much improved over 2013 for road safety. Three fatalities occurred (which is sadly three too many), compared to five the previous year. There were six serious crashes compared with 13 in 2013. Only one of these accidents occurred on local roads, the others happening on the State Highways.
- From 1 July 2014 to date, Council has received 1,098 service requests. 91% were closed off within their required time frame. The majority by far of the requests for service are for water leaks (330). Potholes (50) are next, followed by trees (48), other parks issues (47), signs (44), street lighting (44), recycling (30), council buildings (27), refuse (24), pensioner housing (21), toilets (17), firemain break (16), litter (15), mowing (9), cemeteries (4) and playgrounds (1).
- The Whites Road carpark at Te Waihou Walkway is complete and now caters for increased numbers of vehicles and visitors.

IN the know

You can keep up to date with Council information via: website:

www.southwaikato.govt.nz
facebook: www.facebook/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil
twitter: @SouthWaikatoDC

IN view

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

Councillor Columns Jenny Shattock

I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year break. It has been a superb summer and long may this sunshine continue in the daytime ... with rain at night for farmers.

2014 was a good year for Council. Some pretty big decisions were made for the district – we set up two Trusts to oversee our investment fund, we distributed \$5 million to the community, Fonterra started its \$350 million expansion, and we started planning the Road/Rail project and Leith Place re-development.

Mayor Neil and I went to China in November to present at an International Mayors Forum. We then visited Ichuan looking at relationship and economic opportunities. A week later we hosted a return delegation from Ichuan. Out of those visits we are investigating student exchange opportunities and scholarships to help fund this initiative plus export opportunities for local products into supermarkets in China.

We were all given holiday reading - 92 pages of budget figures for the next ten years! Excellent background for the workshops we had in January where we talked long term planning and the rating impacts of decisions we make. This information will come to you to comment on in March.

It's been a busy start to the year. Mayor Neil and I turned the first sod for the development of the road/rail terminal that Council has been working on with R J Lincoln Ltd. The road is currently being built and a warehouse and concrete pad will follow. It should be operational by April and already a business has signed up to use part of it for storage of product rather than that product being stored in Australia.

Mayor Neil and I also met with the Filipino Ambassador here in Tokoroa in January. She was in Tokoroa for three days using Tokoroa as a central base for

consular services to the Filipino people in the central and north of the north island. We had over 200 visitors to Tokoroa from as far north as Whangarei over the time she was here and she plans to come back to Tokoroa. She revealed some Filipino investment partnership investigations in the South Waikato which hopefully will come to fruition in 2015.

We have just received draft plans for the Leith Place Development. Council will be talking with Leith Place businesses and the Tokoroa community before anything is finalised.

I'm looking forward to another busy and positive year. I think we have a good Council that cares for our community and wants the best for our district and we work hard together to achieve that.

I wish you all the best for 2015.

Jeff Gash

Well, what a busy 2014 we had. As new councillors we have well and truly got our feet under the table in the past 12 months. There has been a tremendous work load in 2014 and 2015 is shaping up as very similar.

It has been busy, but also extremely rewarding with the Long Term and Annual Plans both being dealt with and the allocation of the money from the \$5 million dollar fund.

I have continued to enjoy my work on council, although not all decisions are easy I can honestly say that as elected members we make all decisions with the best interests of the South Waikato District in mind. Rest assured that this group of councillors work well together in a forthright and democratic way.

Highlights for me in the last year are of course the \$5 million fund allocations, the finalising of the Economic Drive Trust and seeing Lake Moananui filled and looking great. On a personal note I was privileged to be sworn in as a Justice of the Peace late in the year and look forward to serving the community in that capacity. Finally I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy 2015 and look forward to the year ahead.

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