

Have your say... coming soon...

Around March/April time every year Council asks what you think about its draft plan for the coming year. This is your time to comment on what is in the plan and to put forward new ideas or suggestions for things you would like us to consider.

The draft Annual Plan is where you can find out what it costs to run the district, how the rates you pay will be spent and what we are planning to do to make the South Waikato a better place to live now and in the future.

Most importantly it is your opportunity to have your say by telling us what you think of our plans, what we've missed, what we can perhaps postpone or cancel (either to save on rates or so that we can include other preferred projects without increasing rates). We are also interested in hearing about your ideas on how Council should spend the \$5-6million it has put aside from the SWIF fund for new significant community and economic development projects.

What documents are prepared?

- full draft Annual Plan 2014-15 - volume 1 provides an overview and volume 2 has more detail on financial information and Council activities
- submission form
- schedule of fees and charges
- summary document highlighting the key projects and financial information

When is the consultation period open?

From Wednesday 26 March to Monday 28 April.

Where can you get a copy?

- Visit www.southwaikato.govt.nz

- Contact the Council office in Tokoroa (07 885 0340), Putāruru (07 883 7189) or the Tirau Information Centre (07 883 1202). Or contact your local library. And a hard copy will be posted to you.
- Call 0800 DRAFTS (0800 372 387) and we can mail you a hard copy and answer any questions you might have.

How can you make a submission?

Submissions open on Wednesday 26 March and must be made by 4pm on Monday 28 April. Submissions can be made online through our website or by completing a form and either posting it to Council or dropping it off at the offices, libraries, pools or events centre.

What is Council's key strategic focus?

Council decided several years ago that the two key objectives for us are to create more jobs and promote the district.

Council has identified 15 strategies that underpin these objectives.

... continued on page 3...

Prepare your winter wood

Firewood is often the last thing on everyone's mind in the summer months but it shouldn't be. **Burning better starts in summer.** If you prepare your firewood for winter now, you will ensure that it is dry and ready for burning in winter.

Dry and seasoned wood not only burns better, but it releases considerably less PM₁₀ into the air.

The Tokoroa City Lions are still holding forest days. For information and updates visit www.tokoroalions.com.

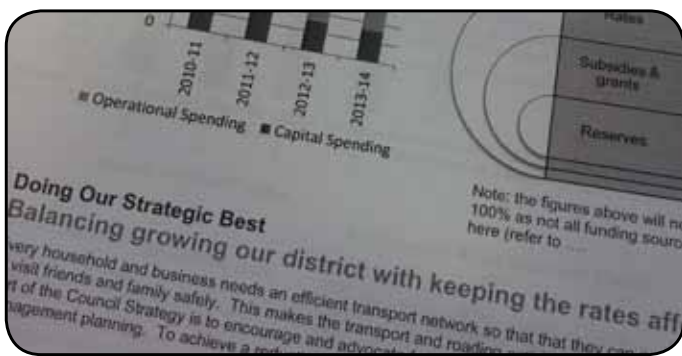
Our Burnwise suppliers have all the information you need for preparing your firewood for the coming winter. Here is a list of our suppliers:

Tokoroa Firewood Ltd
0508 FOR WOOD
0508 367 9663

Balmoral Firewood Supplies
07 886 7550

Tokoroa City Lions
www.tokoroalions.com

Central Bay Firewood
07 886 6387



IN brief

- The rural roading rehabilitation programme is progressing well. Six kilometres on Horahora and Waotu Road has been completed recently.
- Realignment of Chisholm's corner on Old Taupo Road is in progress.
- The biennial inspection of bridges and large culverts was completed and a maintenance programme is being developed based on the results.

IN side

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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

Is recycling a load of rubbish or is rubbish recycling?

Imagine 550 truck and trailers loaded to the top. That is how much rubbish is collected in the South Waikato every year. More than 10 truck and trailer loads every week. Full of rubbish.



However instead of just dumping it into the landfill, 100 of those trucks are taking their load to be turned into egg trays, greenhouses and beer bottles.

But only if you sort it for recycling.

On average, each person in the South Waikato makes 610kgs of household waste each year.

Of that, only 120kg is recycled.

If we continue at this rate, the Tokoroa Landfill will be full in eight years. By increasing our recycling efforts we will extend the life of the landfill so that we won't need to replace it as soon - and pay for a new one.

There are many reasons to reduce waste and recycle. Caring for your environment is the obvious one, but it can also save you money. If nothing else, you will buy fewer rubbish bags.

Yes, recycling takes a bit of thought and organisation, but once you have system sorted and are into a routine, it is easier than throwing it out.

Consider making it a New Year's resolution. A challenge for your household perhaps? Can you reduce your 'waste' rubbish by half? Or more?

The best way to reduce waste is when you make a purchase.

Do you really need that packaging/bag? Is it cheaper to buy it in bulk and put it in a storage container when you get home?

These are only little decisions, but can add up to saving a lot of waste (and money).

When you are using something disposable, think twice. Do you use a paper towel, or a cloth you can wash out and use again? Do you use cling-film, or a lidded container (a recycled ice-cream container perhaps)?

And then, before you throw it out - ask, can you re-use it? Shake the bread bag out for re-use. Use toilet roll cores as pots for seedlings. Use egg trays as fire lighters. Cut milk bottles into containers for nuts and screws in the garage. Stuff your Grandma probably did to save the environment (and money).

And if you can't re-use it, maybe someone else can. One person's 'waste' is another's resource.

- Can an opportunity shop sell it for a good cause?
- Can a jam-maker re-use your glass jars?
- Will the kindy want milk bottle lids for craft projects?

This is recycling in its purest form. It is a matter of being organised. It's surprising how much you can do, and it soon becomes second nature.

Rubbish can get a little smelly; one way of reducing the smell from our rubbish is to start composting. Food scraps can be turned into amazingly rich soil. With these, ensure your food scraps are mixed with a small amount of lawn clippings (green mulch) and brown mulch like wood chips or shredded paper etc, and lots of air. These produce fantastic soil for the garden, but unless mixed and aerated well can become a smelly mess.

Stick to composting vegetables only though, because meat and bones attract flies and rats.

A tidier way to compost scraps is a spinning compost bin. You can purchase these or they are simple to make - basically they are a drum with air holes which you rotate.

Alternately you can start a worm farm; just remember that worms don't like meat or bones either. Worm farms produce fantastic fertilizing liquid for your pot plants. Or for indoor use, try the bokashi bucket; it sort of pickles your scraps into compost and is available at hardware stores.

Unwanted plastic, glass, paper, cardboard and tins go in your recycling crates to be collected each fortnight (or dropped off at the recycling centres).

Green and maroon 60 litres crates (or smaller 45ltr ones) were distributed to every household several years ago. These are collected fortnightly by Council. Extra crates are available from Council for \$15.

Last year, the district recycled 2,310 tonnes of waste. This is collected by Council's waste contractor and sorted by the South Waikato Achievement Trust that employs people with

... only 1/5 of rubbish created in the South Waikato is currently recycled...

Below: William Rollo uses a forklift to shift cardboard towards the presses.



disabilities. They check it, pack it and send it around the world. Where does it all go you may be wondering?

- Cardboard goes to Kinleith and is turned back into pulp.
- Paper is sold through a broker and can end up as anything from an envelope to a fruit tray.
- Plastic bottles are squashed and exported to China or Malaysia where they are re-processed back into a range of plastic products.
- Glass goes to Auckland to be melted down and made into new bottles. And yes, metal tops need to be removed! Bottles are sorted by colour, brown beer bottles can't make clear glass.
- And tins and cans are sold to metal recyclers.

Spare a thought for the staff sorting your recycling. They take great pride in their work and say it is much nicer when things are washed and not smelly. Broken glass is dangerous and they don't like picking rotting household rubbish out of the recycling! So give your recycling a rinse before dropping it in your crate. The smell of sour milk from an un-rinsed milk bottle is quite something!

If you sort, recycle and reduce your rubbish, you are not only saving yourself money, but you are also creating jobs in our community and being kind to your kid's environment.

Council's contractors and collectors can only do so much. **Recycling begins in the home and is up to you.**

Alice Uiese is one of 16 people who process our recycling. Here she checks plastic before it is squashed and baled for export.



Where to take clothing, furniture, household goods, toys and books:

Tirau

- Salvation Army Family Store, Main Road

Putaruru

- PAWS, (Pet Animal Welfare shop), Princess St
- Fresh Start, (Baptist Church), Princess St
- St Pauls Opportunity Shop, Main St

Tokoroa

- SPCA Variety Store, Mannering St
- Salvation Army Family Store, Mannering St
- PAWS, Rosebery St.
- St Vincent

Where to take plastic, glass, paper, cardboard and tins:

In addition to the fortnightly kerbside collections, you can drop off at the recycling centres at:

- Depot Street, Tirau
- Putaruru Transfer Station
- Tokoroa landfill in Newell Road
- South Waikato Achievement Centre in Thompson Street, Tokoroa
- Waotu and Dreghorn carpark in the Tokoroa CBD

Where to take car bodies:

- Scrap metal dealers will pay you for these. Check your yellow pages

Where to take whiteware, old television sets and metals:

- Tokoroa Landfil and Putaruru Transfer Station (fees apply)

Where to take greenwaste (tree branches, lawn clipping etc):

Tokoroa Landfil and Putaruru Transfer Station (it is mulched into compost); fees are half the price of general rubbish

Opening hours:

Tokoroa Landfil: Tuesday to Sunday 9.00am - 4.00pm

Putaruru Transfer Station: Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday 9.00am - 4.00pm

... continued from page 1...

These strategies are our focus for the next 10 years. If you want more information on these strategies you can access our Long Term Plan online or call Council and we will post you a copy.

We are very aware that Council delivers plenty of other services, some discretionary and some by statute (ie, that we have to do under the law). And we have to balance all of this - working towards our two key objectives and delivering our wide and varied range of services with what our community can afford. Our community is faced with significant financial pressures and some tough decisions are needed to ensure that we focus on the important things.

What is the one big consultation issue?

First off, anyone can submit on or question any part of the plan, any project we support or service we offer.

But Council will be specifically looking for feedback on one key point. Some may recall that following public consultation over the past couple of years, we decided to move the bulk of our investment

fund (\$26million) outside of Council into an external Trust. This is being done in order to safeguard this funding for our current community in the event of amalgamation. (See page 4 for more on amalgamation).

Council has decided however to retain a portion of this investment fund (between \$5 and \$6 million) in-house to put towards some significant economic and community development projects that Council and the community have identified over the past years that would be of value but that are outside of what Council would normally fund through rates.

This funding is not for supporting the operations of community groups - the money is planned to be spent on significant new projects.

We are very interested in hearing from you about these proposed projects and we will be inviting you to suggest other projects for consideration. There will be more detail on this in the draft Annual Plan, but we wanted to get you thinking now about some large significant initiatives or projects with an economic or community benefit.

How can you learn more and ask questions?

If you would like more information or to ask questions, attend one of five public meetings hosted by His Worship the Mayor and Councillors:

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 2 April	7-9pm	Upper Atiamuri Hall, SH30, Upper Atiamuri
Thursday 3 April	7-9pm	Arapuni Hall, Arapuni Road, Arapuni
Tuesday 8 April	7-9pm	Tirau Hall, Main Road, Tirau
Wednesday 9 April	7-9pm	Putaruru Plaza Theatre, Kensington Street, Putaruru
Thursday 10 April	7-9pm	South Waikato District Council, Chamber, Torphin Crescent, Tokoroa

The Draft Annual Plan 2014-15 will be open for public consultation next month. Call 0800 DRAFTS for more information. Have your say...

Amalgamation... where is this at?

Central government has mapped out a very clear process for potential Local Government reorganisation and several applications have been lodged for various areas of New Zealand[^]. None of these applications currently make reference to the South Waikato; although we believe that proposals are being developed that do include us. These proposals could be lodged as early as March. It is possible that amalgamation could mean our district gets fully incorporated with other districts or that our current district could be split. We just don't know at this stage.

[^] Four applications have been lodged: Far North District Council Reorganisation, 'A Better Hawke's Bay' Trust Reorganisation, Wairarapa Councils Reorganisation and Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Reorganisation applications can be made by any individual or any organisation (it doesn't have to be a council) seeking the union of districts, the transfer of statutory obligations and the altering of boundaries; or varying combinations.

How would amalgamation affect local democracy?

Amalgamation could make it more difficult for the current South Waikato communities to have their say. If we were to amalgamate with a larger town or city, such as Hamilton or Rotorua, it is likely that their voice would be 'louder' than our communities', because they have a larger population. Communities would also have fewer elected members representing them in the new super-council. However on the flip side, shared services and improved efficiencies could result in lower rates. More local

or community boards could be introduced, which would possibly bring the local voice back to local communities.

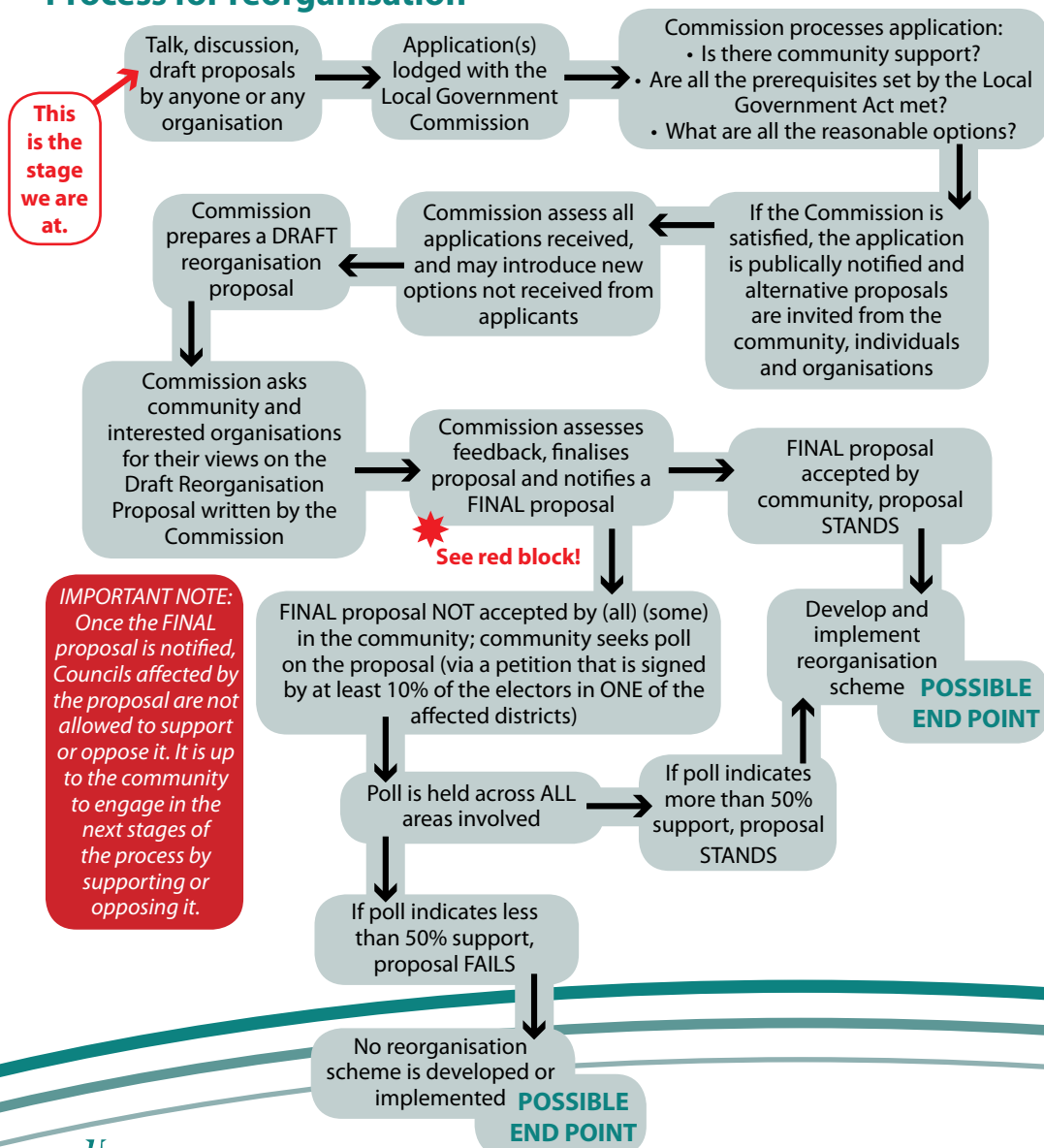
What would amalgamation mean for the services delivered by Council?

Residents should still receive all the same services they currently enjoy. Some services may be delivered by Council owned companies rather than the super-council, such as water, wastewater or roading companies.

Will amalgamation save ratepayer funding?

Those who are in favour of amalgamation would perhaps say yes. Our Council notes that a financial review of the Auckland City amalgamation didn't happen, so saying amalgamation will save costs is difficult to say for definite.

Process for reorganisation



608 TV sets recycled!

Well done to everyone who recycled their old TVs as part of the TV Takeback scheme - as at 1 February our district has recycled 608 old television sets. That's four shipping container loads!

Did you know that TVs contain materials, like lead, that are hazardous to the environment and your health, so they shouldn't be dumped in landfills. Most of an old TV can be recycled! The glass is processed and recycled overseas as well as the circuit boards, and the copper wire and aluminium is removed and recycled here in New Zealand.

Under the scheme TVs can be recycled at a discounted rate until our district reaches its quota of 1,000 sets, so if you have an old TV set to recycle now's the time to do it! The Government is offsetting the cost during TV Takeback so that Council only has to charge the weight over the weighbridge which is normally around \$2 or \$3, but a maximum of \$5. Just drop into the landfill in Tokoroa or the transfer station in Putāruru.

THE RECYCLING PROCESS



Council wastewater plant improvements clean up Oraka Stream

At the NZ River Awards held late last year, the Oraka Stream was awarded "the most improved stream in the Waikato region" and was the second most improved stream in the North Island!

The awards identified rivers in nine regions across New Zealand that had shown meaningful and significant improvement over the past decade as a result of deliberate action to bring about water quality improvement.

The awards were based on a review of regional councils' monitoring of long term trends of E.coli data at over 300 water quality monitoring sites throughout New Zealand. E.coli is an indicator of pathogens associated with faecal contamination of rivers and therefore an important indicator of water quality. The main sources of faecal contamination in New Zealand are wastes from humans and farm animals, such as sheep and cows.

"Improvements to Council's wastewater treatment plants in Putāruru and Tirau which are located upstream of the water quality monitoring site on the Oraka Stream were a significant contributor to the 7.3% improvement in the quality of the Oraka Stream," said Andrew Pascoe, Council's Services Manager.

"Our Council has made substantial upgrades to the Putāruru wastewater treatment plant, particularly targeted at

the final disinfection of the wastewater," continued Mr Pascoe.

"The 2001 upgrade at Putāruru consisted of refurbishing and reconfiguring the existing plant, adding additional tertiary treatment in terms of a final clarifier, UV disinfection and a diffuse stream discharge filter," explained Colin Cranfield of Harrison Grierson, the engineering firm that was contracted for the project. "In 2007 a further upgrade was undertaken to the plant to install a drum filter before the UV disinfection system to improve the removal of suspended solids and hence the performance of the disinfection process."

"The Tirau Sewage Treatment Plant was commissioned in 2006 and was New Zealand's first ever municipal membrane bioreactor (MBR) sewage treatment plant," continued Mr Cranfield. "MBR is the combination of an intensive biological treatment process and the use of advanced membrane technology for filtration. This process produces a disinfected effluent that removes viruses and practically all bacteria."

It is likely that other mitigation measures from improved farming practices, increased riparian protection and advances made by other industries to their discharge into the stream have also contributed to the improved water quality of the Oraka Stream.



Talking safety with our Police



Well done South Waikato! Policing on South Waikato roads over the Christmas/New Year period saw fewer vehicle crashes and reduced reported #555 calls for drivers doing dangerous overtaking, excess speed, tailgating and vehicle offending. These bad driving habits can have serious consequences not only for the driver and passengers of the offending vehicle but for other road users too.

The majority of drivers during the holiday period complied with the lowered speed limit tolerance. It was as though drivers were more relaxed on their journey and not making those simple mistakes.

Police strictly enforce the reduced speed threshold and have no tolerance with those flouting the law.

We will continue to focus on drink driving, restraints and other unsafe driving techniques. If you are stopped you can expect to be breath-tested, anywhere, and at any time of the day or night!

Reducing the incidences of burglaries can be as simple as reporting suspicious behaviour, locking your doors and not leaving windows open. These are simple quick steps we can all take.

Sometimes people may have information about a crime in their neighbourhood or town but they don't want to speak to the Police directly. In those cases call the CrimeStoppers confidential crime line toll free on 0800 555 111.

Crime can't survive in communities that care and Police can't act on something we don't know about. If you suspect something, RING 111. Remember: "If in doubt - give the Police a shout."

What's on at The Plaza?

Happy New Year from the South Waikato Arts Trust.

I trust that you have enjoyed a fun filled relaxing break and that 2014 will bring excitement your way.

With the New Year upon us it is a timely reminder to the residents of the South Waikato that our regular users; Mah-jong, Putaruru Over 50s, Indoor Bowls, South Waikato Country Music Society and South Waikato Country Music will continue to meet at the Plaza.

Should any new organisation wish to hold their meetings or activities at The Plaza please contact Catherine on 883 8596 Monday to Friday – 9am to 2.30pm.

My first six months as Office Administrator at The Plaza has been busy and exciting with a wide variety of entertainment on offer. Definitely something for everyone.

We are always on the lookout for different shows or entertainment, so if you have something special you would like to see us provide, please do let me know. Should you wish to hold a private function, there are room options available and I would be only too pleased to show you around the facility.

Exercise classes are currently not being held at The Plaza. If this appeals to you, please contact The Plaza.

For any further upcoming events here that The Plaza please visit our website at www.plaza.org.nz



Council against Cannabinoids

There is continued concern from South Waikato communities regarding the sale and availability of psychoactive substances (commonly referred to as 'legal highs' or 'dairy dak') and what Council is doing about it.

We often receive questions from people such as "Can you create a bylaw to ban these products?" or "Why can't you just close the shop down or move it?"

Council shares the community's concerns relating to these psychoactive substances and we are completely against the sale and supply of these products.

However, like every other Council across the country, we are subject to many pieces of legislation that we are, by law, required to adhere to.

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2013 was put in place to regulate the importation, manufacture and supply of psychoactive substances, and to help protect the health and minimise harm to individuals using psychoactive products. An authority within the Ministry of Health has been set up to administer a legal framework for New Psychoactive Substances (NPS).

The Act at a glance:

- The Act sets up a legal framework for the testing, manufacture, sale and

regulation of psychoactive products.

- Health and harm minimisation are included in the Act's purpose.
- Products will no longer be sold in dairies, grocery stores etc. People and businesses will need a license to sell these products.
- There will be restrictions on advertising, marketing, display and the purchase age (18+).
- Products will undergo rigorous clinical testing to determine whether they are 'low risk'.
- Products which appear to cause more harm than clinical testing showed can be pulled from the market.
- A register of all approved and unapproved products will be publically available. You can find this list on the Ministry of Health website.
- No further NPS can be sold unless approved by the Authority.
- Provides for councils to have a Local Approved Products Policy (LAPP) restricting the sale of NPS to broad areas within its district like town centres, so they can be monitored by authorities.

Council's role around the sale and supply of NPS is very restricted, but the Act does allow for us to develop policies around where

licensed retail outlets can be located. Council is currently working on a policy that will prohibit NPS being sold within a specific distance (eg, 50 or 100 metres) of another licensed out let or a sensitive site (eg, churches, schools, child care centres).

Unfortunately we cannot make these restrictions so tight that they effectively ban the sale of these substances completely, as that would contravene the Act. We are mapping out a plan that will provide for the best possible outcome. Council will be taking this policy to a workshop in March and it will go out for public consultation after that. This will be your opportunity to have your say, so make sure you look out for the advertising. Just remember our policy cannot contravene the Act.

The government is looking into reviewing the current Act in mid-2014, and any policy that we create cannot be adopted until the reviewed Act becomes law.

This is unfortunate, as it means we cannot do anything about existing sites that sell these products, but we will be preparing the policy so that it can be adopted as soon as the reviewed Act becomes law.

It may be of some comfort for our community to know that although we cannot yet adopt

a policy restricting these sites, there is a hold on any new retail sites being established until the regulations of the reviewed Act come in to play.

His Worship, Mayor Neil Sinclair was set to meet with the Associate Minister of Health, Todd McClay just as In Touch was signed off to print. We will keep the community up to date with what was discussed.

Council has been advocating for many months with Ministers and the Health Department to find a way to completely ban these substances. The key problem is if the 'brand names' are banned, the product is then simply re-named and able to be sold again legally under its new name.

"So we have been encouraging the government to find a way to ban the individual chemical compositions so that no products can be made," explained Mr Mayor. "There are other possibilities like making some brands legal (the safe ones that have been tested) and banning 'all others'. The way forward is complex and in the hands of the Ministry of Health. I would like to assure our community that we are doing everything we possibly can to get rid of them completely or at the very least make their availability as restricted as we are legally able to."

First SW school to get GOLD for being

GREEN

Hats off to Te Waotu School for being awarded gold for their environmental projects under the Enviroschools programme. Te Waotu is the first school in the district to receive the award.

"Council funds the programme together with Waikato Regional Council and Enviroschools Foundation," said James Piddock, Council's Environmental

Monitoring Officer who facilitates the Enviroschools programme.

"Te Waotu School has a fantastic 'green' philosophy," said Mayor Neil Sinclair who attended the award presentation.

"The effort, enthusiasm and ingenuity that the children, parents, principal and teachers put into their environmental projects

and sustainability is an example to others," continued the Mayor.

Te Waotu School registered as an Enviroschool seven years ago and were one of the first South Waikato schools to take up the environmentally sustainable challenge. There are now eight local schools signed up.

The Enviroschools Programme supports children and young

people to be active citizens, contributing to ecological regeneration and the creation of healthy, resilient and sustainable communities. Council has supported the programme since 2008.

Other local Enviroschools in the South Waikato are: Kuranui, Tirau, Tainui, Strathmore, Tokoroa North, Putāruru and St Mary's primary schools.



Te Waotu Enviroteam leaders show off their 'evidence' wall - all the things they have done to qualify for the Green Gold Award.

Council takes on Facebook



Council entered into the world of social media in March of last year by launching a Facebook page. Social media has become a valid and effective means of communication for local government organisations, with over 71% of New Zealand councils using Facebook and other social media sites to interact with their communities. We felt it was an important time for Council to start a Facebook page so that we could interact with our active online communities. Council's Facebook page is managed by Communications Manager, Kerry Fabrie, and Communications Officer, Sina Tolovae.

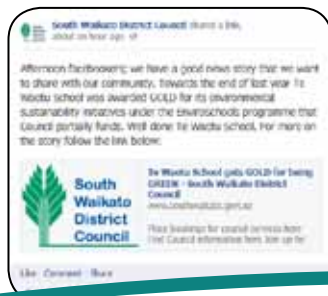
We have now been on Facebook for almost a year and we are very pleased with the results to date. Through Facebook we have been able to update South Waikato communities with Council news, promote district events, share local success stories, and so much more. We continue to receive lots of engagement on our page from the community and we really enjoy being able to respond to any comments we receive in a prompt and personal manner.

Because Council's Facebook page is set up as a business/organisation page, it limits our ability to take part in

Facebook conversations that happen outside of our page (eg community group pages like the Genuine Tokoroa Page). But we do keep an eye on these pages in case any relevant topics come up that we can address on our own page.

A few months after creating our Facebook page, our Communications team set a goal to reach 400 likes by 30 June 2014. We are thrilled to say that we have already reached this goal, and our likes are still growing. Thank you to everyone who helped us get to 400 likes. We hope that you have found and continue to find our page beneficial and enjoyable. If you are on Facebook and you haven't 'liked' us yet, you can find us at www.facebook.com/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil, or simply search for us in the search bar. You are more than welcome to share our page, as well as our posts, to your online networks - the more likes we receive the greater our reach is, and the more we can keep our community informed.

We have also started up a Twitter account so we can provide all you tweeters out there with quick updates from Council. We are still relatively new to the Twitisphere, but if you're on there you can follow us @SouthWaikatoDC.



Lake Moana nui repairs

Council is set to begin the repair work at Lake Moana-nui in mid-February this year. The design work is almost complete and the next stage is for our Consultants, Tonkin and Taylor, to let a contract for the dam remedial works.

There are two main problems with the lake: a build-up of silt at the southern end and seepage through the dam at the northern end.

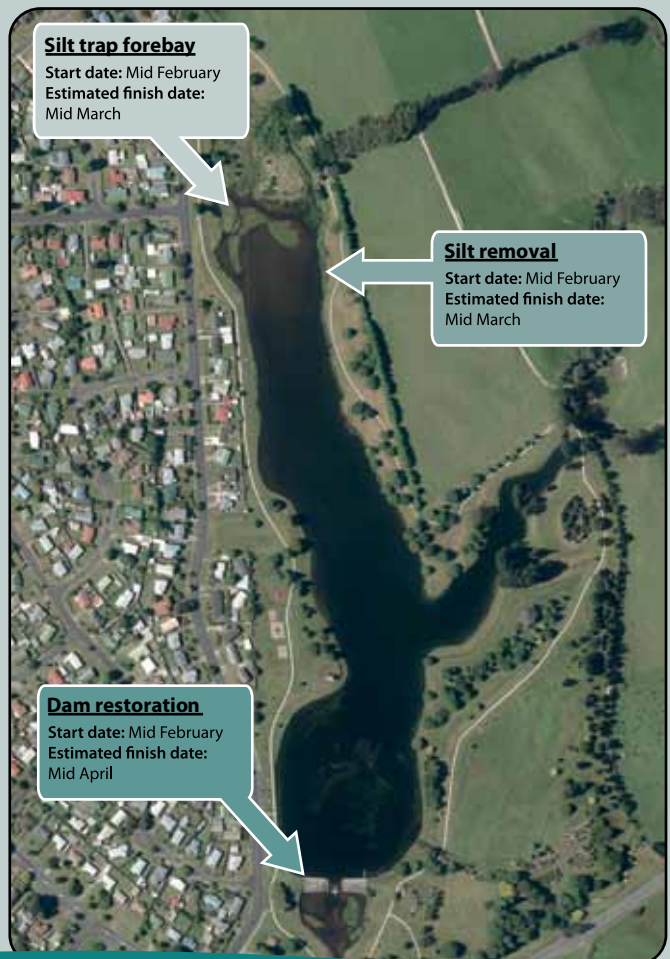
"Effectively Council has decided to fix the seepage through the dam, remove the silt that has built up since the lake was constructed in 1973 and to do some work around preventing further silt build up," said Council's Special Projects Manager, Roger Fisher.

The repair work is estimated to take three months to complete, and will cost \$629,000. This will cover the upstream works (\$347,000), design, consents, testing and supervision (\$106,000), forebay silt trap (\$68,000), and the silt removal from the upper lake (\$108,000). Council will be funding \$30,000

with money set aside for this project in this year's budget, and the remaining \$599,000 will be loan funded. Council loan funds new costly projects so that the cost of repaying the loan and interest is spread over a number of generations of ratepayers. This means the rating cost is paid for by all current and future ratepayers.

Until the work is complete, the lake will remain in its near empty state, and during this time, areas that are classified as construction sites will be for authorised personnel only. Council would like to remind people that the soft mud is dangerous and to adhere to the warning signs and barriers. They are there for a reason. Swimming in the lake is unsafe due to the water quality and the soft mud. Please keep children away from the water's edge.

The image below maps out where the work is to be carried out and the time frame for each aspect of the project.



IN brief continued...

- The footpath extension and fencing along Manfield Street is complete. This improves both the connectivity network and safety in the area.
- The South Waikato has recorded five fatalities in 2013 compared to seven in the previous year. Factors that contributed to these fatal crashes were speeding, failure to keep left, inattention and travelling too fast for the conditions.
- A driver distraction campaign was held in December in partnership with the Police. It focussed on driving with cellphones. Drivers with children were also provided with information on the new child restraint laws.
- Council is hosting the Chinese Consul General for a two day visit to the district later in February. The purpose of the visit is to look at farming, forestry and husbandary investment opportunities to further our economic growth.
- The Day/Night Thriller mountain bike event will now be held in Tokoroa at the Cougar Park. This popular event normally attracts over a thousand participants, so this is a major win for our district. It will be held in September later this year. Well done to everyone who played a part in getting it here!

IN the know

Council's Animal Control team have an active Adopt a Dog programme. If you are thinking of getting a dog, have a look at www.southwaikato.govt.nz - Council Services tab - Animal Control - Adopt a Dog.

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.

Councillor Column Jeff Gash

Happy New Year to everyone, I hope you all had a safe and enjoyable Christmas and were able to spend time with family and friends enjoying a well deserved break. I personally only had a few stat days off and was back to work, but enjoyed spending some time camping at one of our great lakes, Whakamaru with my family and friends at the end of January.

It's been a busy few months with Council since the elections in October. I have spent 14 full days and six half days involved in some form of Council business, either meetings or new member training as well as familiarisation tours of our districts assets and facilities. These in particular have been of great benefit to the

new councillors and a great refresher for those who were re-elected.

Council is currently discussing budgets for rating purposes for the coming year. This is a very delicate balancing act, in that we want to be able to fund new and existing projects, but are also aware that we need to keep any possible rates increase to an affordable level for all ratepayers in the South Waikato. Not an easy task, I assure you.

I am looking forward to the year ahead dealing with the many and varied challenges we face as a district and Council.

I hope you all have a safe and prosperous year and am only too happy to discuss any concerns you may have.

Councillor Column Jenny Shattock

A happy New Year to everyone. I hope you were able to take some time over the holidays to have a break and re-charge your batteries for 2014.

The start to my year is one of change. I started working with TANGS in 1995 and then with Classic Hits in 2003. My life has been particularly busy over those years and recently I have made the decision to retire and leave my role at Classic Hits to spend more time with my family, grandchildren and carrying out my council duties. When this copy of In Touch is delivered I will have retired from the radio station.

Work didn't stop over the holidays for elected members. At the end of last year we were given draft budget papers for the Draft 2014-15 Annual Plan to read, digest, make comments and then give staff feedback for workshops in early February. We are all intent on keeping the rates as affordable as possible but it's a balancing act as we also recognise that we need to provide services and facilities for our community to keep going forward.

We've also met to discuss the Investment Fund. Staff have accomplished some good work; the draft deed of trust has been completed and we are now moving towards approaching organisations to

put forward representatives to sit on an Appointments Panel that will appoint Trustees for the SWIF and Economic Drive Trusts. We've made the decision to retain \$5 - \$6million within council to fund community projects as we did when the SW Sport & Events Centre was built and we will go out for public consultation during the Draft Annual Plan to see what options the community puts forward.

Not long after I came back to work I attended the sod-turning for the State Highway 1/5 intersection that has been on the books for years. We can finally tick that project off however there are still other safety improvements that Council thinks we need the NZ Transport Agency to look at. The speed limit just past the Dunham's Park Bridge needs to be reduced as coming south it goes from 100km to 60km at the bridge and it takes vehicles until they are well into the urban area to slow down. With Te Wananga O Aotearoa and Waiariki Institute of Technology combining as an educational hub there will be more students crossing SH1 so we need to moderate the traffic along that stretch of road. Council will continue to work on road safety for our community.

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