



New look library service... GO LIVE Thursday 2 November

South Waikato District Libraries are set to Go Live on Thursday 2 November with a new Library Management System.

The new system is managed through the Kōtui Consortium which is used by 36 other New Zealand councils. So pretty well tried, tested, implemented and successful.

The libraries will be closed from Tuesday 31 October* to do the big 'switch over'. Kōtui support staff and the library team will conduct a thorough system test on Wednesday 1 November... and - touch wood - we'll be live and open again for business with the new system on the Thursday!

This new management system will allow the libraries to deliver a higher quality service than is possible with the current system.

"We will be able to offer enhanced access for customers

to online services and an improved interface," explained Library Manager Lalita Sudhakar. "Customers will be able to do searches using a familiar 'google-like' interface across both physical and online resources held or subscribed to by the libraries."

According to Lalita the new system also allows the libraries to connect directly with customers through the 'Bookmyne' application for notifications and allows access to the library catalogue.

The system comes with full helpdesk support for staff.

The first set of data extraction for a test load to the new [test] system has been done, and the library staff are currently in the process of tidying up the library data files for customer and item records, etc. Library staff have undergone training.

** The Putāruru office and library building will be open, but to deliver Council services only (ie, the library service won't be open).*

• Running out of reading material during the closure dates... 'cos we're going to be holding a massive Book Sale during those three days... so regular users who simply have to have a book on the go - you can still get your reading fix.

What users DON'T need to worry about!

- Books that users have out around this time won't be due back during the closed days because the closed days are programmed to read as 'public holidays' so you won't be charged overdue fines.
- Logins are automatically transferred, so no need to think of new log-ins and passwords... your login will work exactly the same.

What users NEED to worry about...

Nothing!



IN brief

- The new online building system AlphaOne is bedding down with staff seeking feedback from users.
- The Putaruru Growth Planning project is in the formal District Plan Review stage... more on that in coming issues.
- Resource consent processing is on track with some minor slippage with statutory timeframes.
- Staying on top of weed spraying has been hard with the wet weather, but our contractor is making the best of the dry days.

IN side

- 2&3 Satisfaction Survey results
- 4&5 Skatepark, Leith Place and more...
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- 8 Councillor columns Councillor contacts

IN house

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

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Satisfaction Survey shows great satisfaction!

Our latest Customer Satisfaction Survey results are pleasing, with most services and facilities showing an improvement in satisfaction. We even saw an improvement in satisfaction with public toilets, but we know there is more improvement to be done!

A few areas have declined in satisfaction and Council will focus on these.

About the survey

The South Waikato Customer Satisfaction Survey is conducted in full annually, with quarterly snapshots. The survey provides a comprehensive set of measures relating to our core activities, services and infrastructure. It is a telephone survey involving calls to 405 residents at four intervals during the year. Respondents in quarter one are not permitted to participate until all four quarters are complete, (ie, the 405 respondents are all different people).

The survey is conducted by a professional research company, independent of Council. At an aggregate level the survey has a 95% accuracy.

Data collection was managed to achieve quota targets based on age, gender, ward and ethnicity.

How to read the pie graphs

People are asked to rank their satisfaction with Council services. There are five satisfaction options, that have been grouped together in the pie charts.

- Red - includes 'very dissatisfied' and 'somewhat dissatisfied'.
- Light green - includes 'somewhat satisfied' and 'satisfied'.
- Dark green - includes 'very satisfied'.

Scores on these pages are rounded so may not quite add up to 100%.

On average across all our services, there is an 88% satisfaction, which is an 8% increase in satisfaction over the 2016 survey (80%).

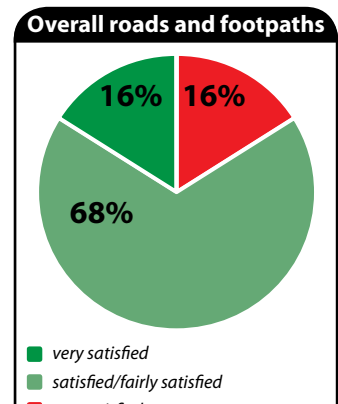
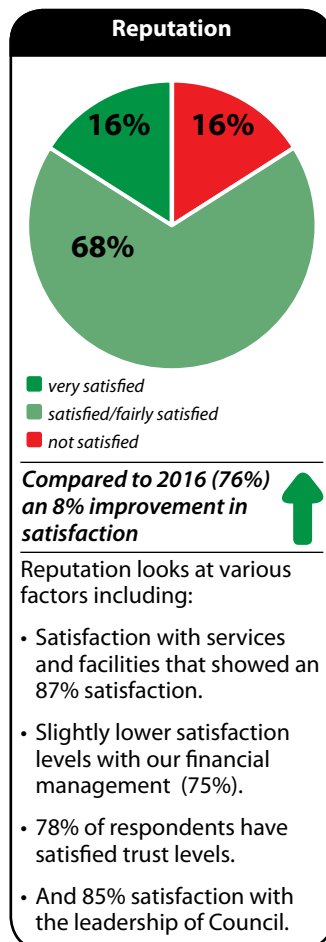
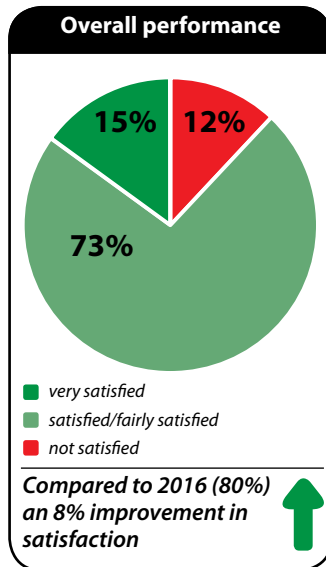
Our Council has a strong reputation profile with 65% of respondents recognising that Council is doing a good job.

It is pleasing to see that four out of five residents (81%) have heard of the Urban Connector. Around one in every ten people use the service, most for shopping (27%). The majority of people who use the service do so because they don't have their own car.

While satisfaction with services and facilities is high, residents are less satisfied with rates representing value for money or recognising the quality of Council's financial management.

A few other statistics:

- 74% of respondents have visited a Council maintained park or reserve
- 23% visited a community hall
- 52% visited a public toilet
- 68% visited a sportsground
- 23% have had direct involvement with dog control
- Dogs are the most common topic that people contact Council about (11% of service requests). This is closely followed by footpaths (9%) and roads (8%).

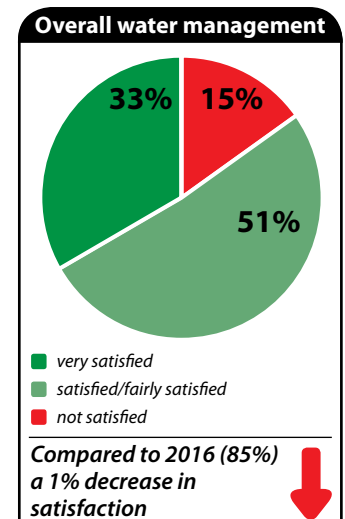


People are most dissatisfied with the adequacy of our cycleways specifically on roads (with just 53% satisfaction). Satisfaction is higher at 81% with other walkways and cycleways in the district.

Despite an increase in complaints about potholes, satisfaction levels with the maintenance of our urban and rural roads remains reasonable at 81% and 76% respectively. This could be because many complaints relate to State Highways and this survey is specifically about local roads that Council maintains.

82% of respondents were satisfied with the safety of Council maintained roads. Satisfaction with footpath maintenance has improved with 84% of respondents showing satisfaction.

Mobility access satisfaction is also pleasing at 81%.



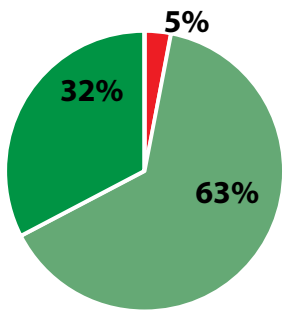
Council looks for satisfaction levels in three main areas here - water supply, wastewater and stormwater. Satisfaction levels are in parenthesis.

We asked respondents to rate satisfaction with the reliability (97%), taste (85%), clarity (88%), odour (90%) and pressure (90%) of water.

We asked respondents to rate satisfaction with wastewater reliability (96%) and how Council treats and disposes of wastewater (92%).

Satisfaction with stormwater is generally lower, probably due to the very wet winter we have had. In terms of the stormwater system's ability to protect property from flooding satisfaction was 83%. Keeping roads and footpaths free from flooding 75% satisfaction and maintenance of our stormwater system, again a 75% satisfaction.

Overall parks and reserves

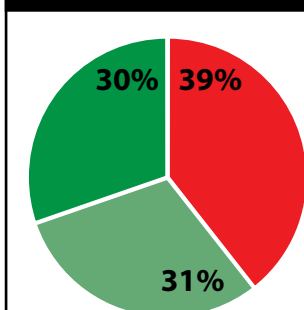


■ very satisfied
■ satisfied/fairly satisfied
■ not satisfied

Compared to 2016 (91%) a 4% improvement in satisfaction ↑

People are most satisfied with sportsgrounds (96%) and cemeteries (also 96%). Other parks and reserves also ranked high with 94% satisfaction rating and playgrounds too at 92%.

Overall handling of enquiries



■ very satisfied
■ satisfied/fairly satisfied
■ not satisfied

Compared to 2016 (51%) a 10% improvement in satisfaction ↑

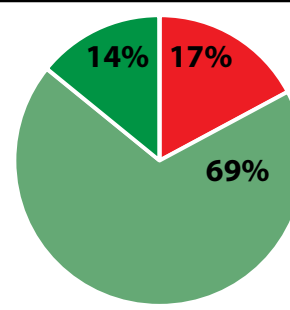
While we are pleased to see an improvement in this area it remains an area of concern.

75% of respondents believe it is easy to make an enquiry or request.

Almost half of respondents (45%) feel that it took too long to resolve the matter.

64% of respondents feel that Council staff understood their query and communicated appropriately.

Overall regulatory services



■ very satisfied
■ satisfied/fairly satisfied
■ not satisfied

Compared to 2016 (80%) a 3% improvement in satisfaction ↑

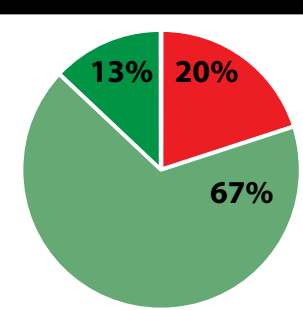
There are a number of services included in regulatory, all with varying satisfaction levels.

People are most satisfied with our response to rural fires (95%), dog control (83%) and premises licensing (like cafes, hairdressers etc) (80%).

Civil Defence preparedness has a 77% satisfaction rating.

Lowest levels of satisfaction are with liquor licensing (70%), building consent processing (69%) and resource consent processing (64%).

Overall communication



■ very satisfied
■ satisfied/fairly satisfied
■ not satisfied

Compared to 2016 (73%) a 7% improvement in satisfaction ↑

Respondents are 74% satisfied with participation in decision making.

Most people (41%) rely on our local newspaper South Waikato News for information about Council. Council's own In Touch newsletter (*that you are reading right now*) is relied on by 14%, Council's website (12%), word of mouth and Facebook (8%). Other methods like flyers, radio, and our new mobile phone app Antenna* were lower.

* Antenna is new information tool! For more on this new mobile phone app... and because there is a little space left on this page!



Install Antenna!

Antenna is simple, easy to use free and no personal information or log on details are required.

Antenna will alert you to recycling days, events, road closures and much more.

Install from the App Store or Google Play. Save places you care about, such as your home, work, rental property or school. Antenna will notify you when something relevant to your chosen place(s) arises.

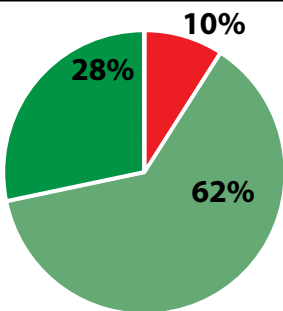
Antenna is FREE.



Antenna
Be informed. Get involved.



Overall waste management



■ very satisfied
■ satisfied/fairly satisfied
■ not satisfied

Compared to 2016 (84%) a 6% improvement in satisfaction ↑

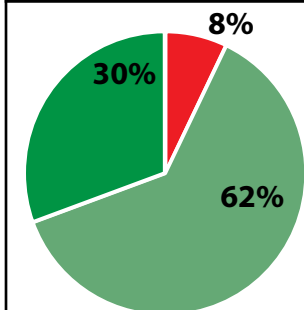
Waste management is a large area of Council. We asked our community to rate our kerbside refuse collection (92% satisfied) and our kerbside recycling collection (86%) separately.

Respondents are 93% satisfied with the Croad Place recycling facility and 89% satisfied with the recycling depots at Putāruru, Tokoroa, Waotu and Okoroire.

Residents are 85% satisfied with the management of loose litter and bins in and around the town.

There is an 80% satisfaction rating with how we manage green waste.

Overall facilities



■ very satisfied
■ satisfied/fairly satisfied
■ not satisfied

Compared to 2016 (89%) a 3% improvement in satisfaction ↑

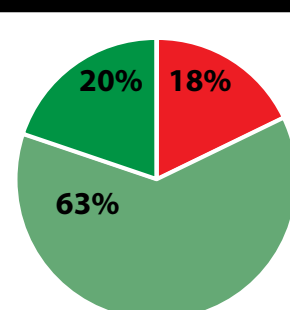
Satisfaction with our facilities is generally very high.

97% of respondents are satisfied with the library facilities and there is a 97% satisfaction rate with the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre.

Pools saw a 93% satisfaction rating and there is a 90% satisfaction rating with community halls.

In terms of facilities, public toilets tend to trail a bit, with a 61% satisfaction. While this is still low and requires more focus, we are pleased that levels of satisfaction have increased over survey results from last year.

Value for money

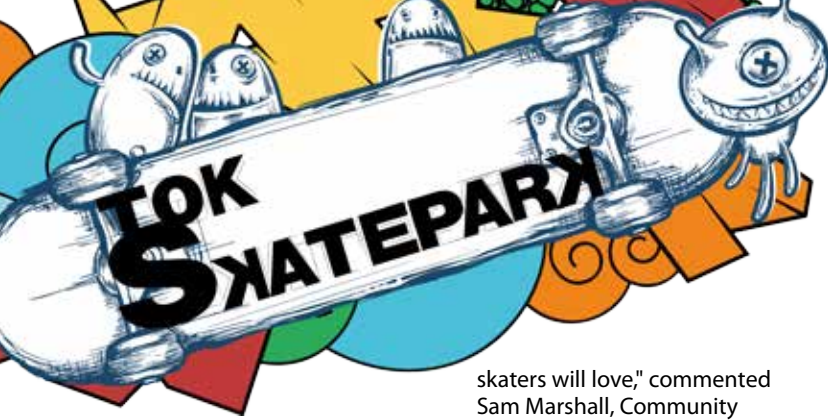


■ very satisfied
■ satisfied/fairly satisfied
■ not satisfied

Compared to 2016 (77%) a 6% improvement in satisfaction ↑

Value for money looks at various factors including:

- The ease of making payments, which scored a 94% satisfaction rating.
- 71% of respondents believe rates are fair and reasonable.
- Satisfaction with fees for things like pool entry fees, dog registration fee, library books and other fees is 83%.



CHECK OUT THE TOKOROA SKATEPARK DESIGN AND 3D MODEL ON OCTOBER 11. FOLLOW THE #TOKOROASKATEPARK HASHTAG FOR UPDATES.



The first designs and a 3D model for the new Tokoroa Skatepark will be available to view from 11 October 2017.

Skatepark designer Richard Smith of RICH Landscapes is excited about the project and is looking forward to hearing back from the community.

Council and the Tokoroa Skatepark committee and working group are thrilled to have teamed up with RICH Landscapes and AMC for the design and build of the new skatepark.

RICH Landscapes is an award winning Landscape and Architecture Company with extensive experience in skatepark design.

"Richard also has 17 years of experience as a skateboarder behind him, something so necessary for understanding good skatepark design - and we're confident that he's going to create a skatepark that our local

skaters will love," commented Sam Marshall, Community Group Manager

RICH Landscapes has worked on skatepark projects such as the Raglan Skatepark extension - for which they won the 2013 New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architecture Resene Pride of Place Distinction Award.

The new skatepark will be built on the vacant land adjacent to the Tokoroa Youth Park. The idea for a new skatepark came from local youth during the 2015 Long Term Plan process.

"It's awesome to see the project moving forward with the designs - I'm really looking forward to seeing this skatepark open for our local skaters," commented Evan Dickenson, Tokoroa Skatepark committee member. "It's in a great spot and will help brighten up the town and encourage travellers to stop in as well."

Once the first design has been reviewed by Council and the community, a final design will

be presented around mid-November, with construction looking to begin in January 2018.

As part of the Tokoroa Skatepark project, Council is also looking into incorporating an outdoor basketball court.

"We are still seeking the funding for the basketball facility but we're keen to hear from our local basketball players about what type of court they'd like to see," said Project Manager, Sarah Flavall.

Council is looking at two options for a court - a three on three half court (back to back) or a full court.

"Once we have a general agreement, we will begin to seek funding for the basketball court - however it's important our community remember that this will be part of stage two for the

skatepark and is contingent on available funding," continued Flavall.

So you if you or anyone you know has thoughts about the Tokoroa Skatepark - make sure you let us know. You can drop by Council, give us a call, leave us a comment on Facebook, or pop into Morrissey's and leave your thoughts in the box provided.



TOKOROA CBD upgrade



The Tokoroa CBD Upgrade is of great interest to our Tokoroa residents, and Council is excited to welcome DCA Architects on board for the design and build of the new Leith Place area.

DCA Architects are based in Rotorua and are known for many of their creative and transformative designs around New Zealand, such as the Redwood Forest public toilets and Murupara Primary School (both pictured below).

"We have seen the initial designs and we are very excited for what is to come for the Tokoroa CBD," commented Mayor Jenny Shattock. "We have undergone a lot of consultation with the community regarding the future of Tokoroa's town centre and we think everyone is going to be pleased with what DCA Architects are dreaming up."

Designs for the new Tokoroa CBD will be available for the public to view in the coming months, and construction is likely to start around mid 2018.

You can view more of DCA Architects work over at their website www.dcaarchitects.co.nz.



WE'RE PLANNING THE NEXT 10 YEARS

So it's time for you to tell us

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

YOU CAN LET US KNOW BY

Emailing us at: strategic@southwaikato.govt.nz

Leaving a comment on our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/southwaikatodistrictcouncil
(Mark your suggestion/comment as LTP feedback please!)

For more information visit:
www.southwaikato.govt.nz - orange button - Say It

Walkways and cycleways for exercising...

Impact of Healthy Rivers on farming and our economy...

Awesome places for communities to enjoy...

Connected communities...

Robust and sustainable infrastructure...

Quality facilities and services...

Council Building Service retains Accreditation

Council's Building Team has again successfully retained its accreditation as a Building Control Authority following a successful audit by International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ).

"This ensures Council can continue to deliver a cost effective building control service to residents and ratepayers," said Sharon Robinson, Council's Regulatory Group Manager.

"We are very pleased with the feedback from the assessors," said Kevin Duthie, Council's Building Control Manager. "They acknowledged that our system has matured well over the years and this translates into efficient processing. They found the audit process itself productive and noted the helpfulness of our team."

The audit took four days and looked at every aspect of the consenting process including vetting, processing and inspection.

The team had a few small procedural items to tidy up, many of which were associated with the current transition period between the old system and AlphaOne. All elements have since been resolved between when the audit was conducted in August to receiving formal notification of accreditation.

"This is brilliant work from the building team," said Mayor Jenny Shattock. "We note that the team were processing the usual number of consents with a new online system AlphaOne and hosting the auditors at the same time. Awesome outcome."

South Waikato keen to fully-LED!

Council is taking the opportunity to become one of the few local authorities in New Zealand to fully complete the replacement of its aging street lights with energy efficient and highly effective LED equivalents.

Council had already identified the LED conversions over 10 years as reflected in the previous LTP so this steady replacement is not new. However the New Zealand Transport Agency is encouraging a new accelerated renewal programme. This means that if we change all of our urban street lights (2,450 across the district) to LED lights over the next year, 85% of the funding required will be subsidised. That's a huge saving for Council and ratepayers.

Council is very keen to take advantage of the accelerated programme to get the massive subsidy and to realise the energy costs savings from LED lights across the district from as early as next year.

Council staff looked at various options of how we can best fund our 15% portion of this project, including using existing financial contributions, road reserve funding, existing operational budget and a loan repaid over five years. We have provided a business case to NZTA and are awaiting approval.

Keeping our kerblines tidy

To help keep our towns looking tidy Council carries out chemical kerblime spraying in our CBD, urban, and residential areas - this activity controls vegetation growth over the kerblime. In the past this activity was done on an annual basis, however Council has made the decision to increase the frequency of this spraying for better maintenance.

The next spraying will occur during October and November. As per usual, if you wish to maintain the kerblime in front of your property yourself, without the assistance of Council's chemical spraying, all you need to do is let us know.

Please contact Andrew Diffey on 885 0772, or by email at andrew.diffey@southwaikato.govt.nz if you would like your property to be excluded from the kerblime spraying programme.



Take on the Taniwha

Ready for your challenge of 2017? The exciting and adventurous Taniwha trail MTB/run/walk along the Waikato River Trails will take place on Saturday 4 November.

Relaxed atmosphere, like-minded people, and a gorgeous scenery. An event for people of all ages and abilities from 7km to 85km, taking on as much of the trails as you want, on foot, two wheels or in a team.

20% local discount available! www.thetaniwha.co.nz



WHAT'S HOT

Public engagement on our Long Term Plan and Bylaws - great to see so many people having their say and letting Council know what they think.

The new Kawe Kōrero app developed by Waikato Regional Council and free to download from Google Play and App Store - learn te reo basics.

The Mayoral Scholarship being open for applications. There are two \$10,000 scholarships available (each valued at \$2,500 per year for a maximum of four years). Students can apply on our website.

Lake Moana nui looking fabulous.

The Tokoroa Big Weekend coming up first weekend in December. The Big Weekend includes three events. This year may be the last ever A&P show in its current format, so be sure to come along and enjoy the last of such an historic long-standing event. There's Carols in Town on Friday 1 December, 6pm to 9pm. The Christmas Parade on Saturday 2 December, 11am (starting at Kindergarten Street) and the A&P Show, also on Saturday 2 December, gates open at 9am, entertainment starts 12noon.

The annual Young Driver Expo was held again at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre in late August. This expo aims to educate young drivers through interactive sessions with members of the three emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance) as well as staff from TCSS. Senior students from the three South Waikato High Schools spent the day engaging in a range of activities that will help them to be safer on the road. The event was well received by the students and we'd like to thank all those who made it possible.



The INCUBATE and ACTIVATE business courses being held in Tokoroa for new and fledgling businesses. The programme is funded by the South Waikato Investment Fund Trust, supported by Council and run through Firestation.

Trees and bulbs waking up for Spring.

Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori 2017 was a hit in the South Waikato, especially at our Wharepukapuka. Library staff organised a fun filled week to help te reo flourish and we'd like to extend a special kia ora to those who made it possible, including Raukawa Charitable Trust, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Hiringa, and Melvina Marsh. Māori Language Week might be done for 2017, but let's all keep encouraging the reo in our everyday lives!



WHAT'S NOT

Potholes, potholes, potholes... and rain, rain, rain...

Finding bubble gum on the floor of the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre arena... yuck. Put it in the bin!

People getting frustrated with Council staff when they wait in a queue at our offices to pay their **Waikato Regional Council**... WRC rates can't be paid at SWDC. Payment options for WRC are on the back of the rates invoice.



Abuse of Council staff on social media. If people in our community have a complaint about a staff member, please contact Council direct. Council takes this very seriously. We remind our residents that much of what we do is legislated and we appreciate that sometimes the rules in legislation can cause frustration and tension, but that should never become abusive. Just a reminder that we work with over 40 Acts of Parliament and 15 other pieces of legislation! There's more than a few rules in there...

Dumping rubbish! Two recent photos taken by Council staff. One pile at the corner of Wiltsdown and Old Taupo Roads and another at the Arapuni dam toilets... damn! How is this okay? Who does this?



Should retailers be allowed to decide to trade on Easter Sunday?

That's the big question at this stage. And the question that Council is asking its community to think about and provide feedback on. Feedback is open from Wednesday 18 October to Friday 10 November. This is not formal consultation, we're just wanting a steer from our community at this early stage.

If, for instance the general consensus is "yes we would like shops to open on Easter Sunday (if the owner/operator wish)" then Council may choose to investigate and develop a suitable policy that will come to the public for formal consultation.

If the general consensus is "no, we think shops should be closed on Easter Sunday" then Council may choose not to commit the resource and staff time to investigating and writing such a policy.

So it's over to you... what do you reckon?

Give us a steer...

Some background to help with your thoughts

The Shop Trading Hours Amendment Act came into effect last year and allows retailers to open on Easter

Sunday. This Amendment refers only to Easter Sunday NOT Good Friday.

Under this legislation councils have the ability to create a policy allowing retailers to open. This policy doesn't have to be blanket across the district, and it can specify which type of retailer can open too.

Who can currently trade on Easter Sunday?

Currently businesses in what are deemed 'tourist centres' can trade on Easter Sunday.

Other businesses that provide services like fuel stations, dairies, cafes/restaurants and garden centres are also legally able to trade on Easter Sunday currently.

This could be viewed by some retailers and others in the community as unfair.

What will Council do with the feedback?

Council will review the feedback and ultimately, based on the feedback, decide between three options.

1. To not develop an Easter Trading Policy (ie, retailers that are not exempt will not be permitted to open on Easter Sunday)
2. To develop an Easter Trading Policy that applies across the district
3. To develop an Easter Trading Policy that defines specific areas in the district, for example the Tirau town centre, Leith Place only... and so forth.

We are looking for an early steer from our community if you want us to develop a draft Easter Trading Policy for formal public consultation or not. **What do you think?**



Join us on Sunday 29 October at 2pm for 'Churchill'.

Or how about an evening event?

Wednesday 25 October, 6.30pm – An Evening with Inna Moment. Grab your friends and make some new ones! Be inspired by the lovely Shadan of 'Inna Moment' - the fantastic confidence boosting style coach. Gold coin entry. All proceeds to Waikato Rural Support Trust. For more details email: rst.wanda@gmail.com.

Friday 27 October, 7.30pm – Floyd Live. While no longer a touring entity, the timeless music of Pink Floyd continues to be passed down from one generation to another. Floyd Live captures the emotive and soulful musicianship of the experienced and seasoned musicians that comprise the eight piece band. Tickets from Eventfinda and The Plaza. Premium \$50, A-Reserve \$40, B-Reserve \$30.

Thursday 2 November, 7pm – Tirau Primary School Presents: 'The Tirau Tamariki Tour'. Join a group of rebellious children on their tour of the South Waikato and learn what they discover. Tickets on sale from 16 October form the school office. \$5 each.

Tuesday 28 November, 7.30pm – Arts on Tour New Zealand presents Magic Lightbox. Delaney Davidson, presents his all new show Magic Lightbox., an incredible blend of live music and film. Tickets \$20, available from The Plaza, iSite Tokoroa, Diamond Jewellers Matamata and Eventfinda.

Website: www.plaza.org.nz
Facebook: The Plaza
Email: theplaza@plaza.org.nz
Phone: 07 883 8596 or 0276 559 715



For more information visit www.southwaikato.govt.nz - orange button - Say It

Haere mai to 35 new New Zealanders

In our second Citizenship Ceremony held at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre, Mayor Jenny Shattock officially swore in 35 brand new New Zealanders.

At the ceremony Mayor Shattock spoke of what a special occasion the event was, saying it was an honour and privilege of Mayors around the country to officiate Citizenship Ceremonies.

"I want to congratulate you all for completing the journey towards Citizenship and for making New Zealand - and the South Waiakto - your home," said Mayor Jenny. "It is an honour to host you. Our futures are now woven together."

Our new citizens come from countries around the world including Holland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Britain, India, Fiji and China.



IN brief continued...

- The Annual Report was adopted by Council.
- Year to date registrations for the popular Taniwha event coming up on 4 November are tracking ahead of previous years, with e-bikes being the biggest movers in entry numbers.
- Patronage figures at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre, Pools and Libraries are all tracking ahead of year to date equivalents from last year.
- A total of 271 people attended one or more of the Māori Language Week events held at our libraries, and a massive 192 children entered the 'Decorate a Tiki' competition.
- Four of our pool staff have updated their Pool Lifeguard Practicing Certificates.
- Staying on top of weed spraying has been hard with the wet weather, but our contractor is making the best of the dry days.
- Lightning strike at the Arapuni and Tirau Wastewater Treatment Plants destroyed the sensors at both reservoirs as well as the booster and control module at Arapuni, amounting to \$20,000 worth of damage. Staff are processing an insurance claim.

IN the know

You can keep up to date with Council information via:
www.southwaikato.govt.nz
[@SouthWaikatoDC](https://www.facebook.com/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil)
info@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 Wendy Cook

Congratulations to our latest sports heroes Toka and Chelsea. I'd like to acknowledge their families, the coaches and sports clubs for their commitment to sport that enables our district to be represented on the World Stage!

My passion is to see our youth competing at any level, as participation is the KEY!

All sports require dedication, hard work and commitment, self-discipline and respect of fellow players. I'd like to think all our sports people are taught how important it is to be graceful in losing and graceful in winning.

If we teach this through sport, then we teach valuable life skills that are with you for LIFE.

In my role as Councillor I attend many meetings. I love nothing more than witnessing first hand someone talking about their dreams with such passion that you know they will come true. If I can be part of making this happen it is reward in itself and that's why I love representing my district and assisting where I can. Part of my role is to listen to people when they are not happy or have complaints about our services or policies. It is fulfilling to listen and help people with their problems and at times this is just assisting in their voice being heard and often just pointing people in the right direction. This doesn't mean "we all get what we want" but it does mean you will be heard, your concerns dealt with appropriately and in a respectful manner.

I recently attended the official opening of Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori Language Week and the official launch of the Kawe Kōrero app.

I found these presentations extremely exciting and my motto is:

"We are never too old to learn" and I believe this is a great example to our young ones!

Councillor Column Bill Machen

The first 12 months of a Councillor's three year term are very busy; setting the Long Term Plan (10 years), the Annual Plan, and this year reviewing a number of Bylaws involving a lot of meetings, hui and consultation with affected parties and the public.

Consultation on our LTP is ongoing and our community is urged to raise their ideas and concerns.

The Property Maintenance and Nuisance Bylaw was proposed at the request of many citizens concerned with the dirty and dilapidated state of some properties in the district. As drafted this Bylaw caused some consternation. Submissions are now closed and Council will be entering the public hearing and deliberation stage very soon.

The weather has been particularly wet and nasty this winter. This has had a major effect on our roading surface with many new (and old) pot holes appearing. At the latest Regional Transport Meeting I attended in Hamilton it seems that all councils in the greater Waikato are suffering similar issues, including on the State Highways. Be assured that once we can be sure the rain has gone for a decent period, our roading crews will be flat out attending to the many roading issues that have been brought to my attention.

I congratulate our Black Fern girls who recently returned to Tokoroa with the Rugby World Cup. Council, in cooperation with other organisations and the families of Chelsea and Toka tried to organise a Welcome Home event for the girls, but the weather and other considerations conspired against us. However we will be doing something special for the annual Christmas Parade that will be held on 2 December this year.

Be there to cheer for Toka and Chelsea! Council will be providing some treats for the kids at the event.

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