

IN touch



A bi-monthly newsletter from your local Council - Issue 51 - DIGITAL EDITION - March (Poututerangi) - May (Haratua)



Message – Mayor Jenny Shattock

In late March our world changed dramatically, not only in the South Waikato, but across New Zealand and throughout the world.

It has been a collective effort by many people to work through this pandemic crisis. The effort from essential workers cannot be understated - emergency service staff, truck drivers, farmers, primary industry workers, medical professionals, supermarket workers, among many others have been the backbone of this crisis. As a country, we owe these people a huge debt of gratitude.

But it's not just essential workers that have touched so many lives. Volunteers across South Waikato have also stepped in to fulfil roles that have meant so much, to so many people. Our volunteers deserve an equally huge thank you for their dedicated and selfless efforts.

Prior to the pandemic crises, Council had already been working through its proposed Annual Plan for the coming year, already having reduced the average rate revenue increase from what was proposed in the Long Term Plan. But once we better understood the full impact of what COVID-19 would mean to our businesses and our people, we knew we needed to do more. This Annual Plan is still open for consultation – it proposes several things, including a 0% average rate revenue increase. Please have your say.

Council's support for the business community continued throughout the lockdown with webinars on critical business support related topics to help business owners and leaders plan for the future. This work continues with a 'Spend Local' campaign that

kicked off this week. Now more than ever, our community needs to support local businesses as we move through the alert levels. Our support is critical to their success.

I want to make special mention of the tremendous effort from our own Council staff and Elected Members. Council staff have worked tirelessly through our Civil Defence response as well as keeping critical services, activities and projects ticking along in some form.

Elected Members have been an essential conduit for community feedback and the efforts of Councillors and Tirau Community Board members has been fantastic. They too have made themselves available all hours of the day to provide support, offer guidance and give answers.

To everyone in our community who stayed home and saved lives, my sincere thanks. The pressure has been great. Our collective effort has been greater.

In closing, going forward I implore you all to Spend Local. Be kind. Take care of each other.

Link for more business support information:
<https://www.swnz.co/covid-19response/>

Link to Council's website:
www.southwaikato.govt.nz



Unprecedented times describes the COVID-19 worldwide epidemic very well. As we watched tragic events unfold around the world, we came together as a country. In the South Waikato, we have done what we always do. We have come together. We have supported each other. We have been kind.

This small column marks a moment in time and is acknowledgement of the many individuals, businesses, organisations, be they paid or volunteer, who have stepped up through this global crisis.

We acknowledge the many people, both in New Zealand and around the world, who have lost their lives to this virus; and the staggering number of lives that have been forever changed by these tragic deaths.

We acknowledge our collective strength, as a community, as a nation, as humanity. May the kindness we have shown others during this unprecedented time stay with us always.

IN brief

- Council adopted Plan Change 1 and 2 for public consultation. These relate to the Putāruru Growth project and infrastructure management. If readers are interested, keep an eye on Council's website and social media sites for more information.
- Council continues to plan for recovery through the COVID-19 situation. We will work with our community and businesses community through these plans in coming months. Recovery is likely to be a key focus on our next Long Term Plan (LTP).
- Moving all of our staff to remote working was no mean feat and Council is mighty proud of the efforts of its Information Technology team who got us up and running and quickly too.

IN side

- 2-3 Annual Plan Spend Local
- 4-5 What's Hot COVID Communications
- 6-7 Lockdown heroes Worried about rates?
- 8-9 Lockdown heroes No wipes down pipes
- 10-11 \$60M application Councillor columns
- 12 Councillor columns Councillor contacts

IN house

Produced in-house for the South Waikato community by the SWDC Communications Team.

Editorial:

Kerry Fabrie
Renee Renata
Anthony Momoemausu
07 885 0340

Special online edition

kōrero mai
now we're
talking...

annualplan2020-21

There is still time to have your say on Council's Draft Annual Plan 2020-21. Submissions close at 4pm on Friday 22 May.

Mayor Jenny Shattock explains that Council was part way through the Annual Plan 2020-21 process, when COVID-19 became a serious pandemic.

"We had already reduced our budgets to propose a 5.6% average rates revenue increase, down from the 7% identified in the Long Term Plan (LTP)," she said. "But when the world changed in late March, we knew we had to do more to help support our community through the economic and hardship impact of COVID-19."

"We are pleased to propose a 0% average rates revenue increase." See block alongside.

Council made several decisions and proposals to achieve this, including postponing the introduction of wheelie bins for urban ratepayers until July 2021.

"We know some people will be disappointed by this, however the impact of COVID-19 on our communities means this is a 3% rate increase we just can't afford right now," said Ben Smit, Council's Chief Executive. "We are also concerned about possible manufacturing and supply issues."

Council is proposing three options to achieve a 0% average rate increase and is asking the community for submissions on its preference. Essentially the options are to take even more operational funding out of the budget, loan fund to support operational funding, or stop funding water asset replacements for one year. Council has a preferred option – to stop funding water asset replacements for one year. Our community is encouraged to read the Consultation Document as all of the options have long term impacts.

Council has several other proposals in the Annual Plan that it is seeking community feedback on. These include waste collection anomalies, Tirau CCTV and Wifi, and Fees and Charges.

"Several of the waste collection anomalies are targeted to specific areas," said Mr Smit. "Residents living in Amisfield, along the Baird Road existing recycling zone and Pellikan Place are encouraged to take particular interest in this year's Annual Plan proposals as we

are proposing changes to waste management collection in those areas.

"We are also proposing to make the funding for recycling more equitable between urban and rural ratepayers, introduce WiFi and CCTV into the Tirau CBD and amend several of our fees and charges," he continued.

Consultation documents are available from our website: www.southwaikato.govt.nz/our-council/consultation/: from supermarkets (Countdown in Putāruru and Tokoroa, New World in Tokoroa and supermarkets in Tirau) and by calling 07 885 0340.

Council is preparing this information during COVID-19 restrictions. Unfortunately our offices and other facilities are currently closed.

If COVID-19 restrictions be lifted, and Council offices and other facilities are permitted to open, hard copy documents will be made available from the normal places.

Does a 0% average rate revenue increase mean a 0% on individual rates bills? No.

While Council is proposing to collect the same amount of rates for the 2020-21 year as we did in the current year (ie, no rate increase) to combat the effects of COVID-19; it does not mean that individual rates bills will all see no change. This is because individual properties have a different mix of services and situations.

The majority of ratepayers will see a small decrease in rates (more than 8,200 properties). A little over 1,650 properties will see an increase, most moderate, but some high. The higher rate increases are for several issues unrelated to Council's wish to reduce the level of rates, such as new subdivisions, new buildings/alterations and signing up to one of our clean heat programmes.

Because Council's preferred option to stop funding the three waters asset replacements for one year only reduces urban ratepayers' rates, this change is not felt in a number of lifestyle, rural and commercial properties.

If you want to check out what your rates for the 2020-21 year are expected to be, please visit Council's website here: <https://www.southwaikato.govt.nz/our-services/do-it-online/rating-and-property-search> and search on your address. If you have questions please call 07 885 0340 to discuss with our rating team.



PANUI
READ
the Consultation
Document



WHAKAARO
THINK
about what makes
sense for you



TUHITUHI
WRITE
your submission

South Waikato evokes wartime spirit as it launches Spend Local campaign

'Spend Local' is the new message from the South Waikato District Council (SWDC) and South Waikato Investment Fund Trust (SWIFT) as they team up to launch a campaign to support local businesses, the local economy and community.

South Waikato District Mayor, Jenny Shattock has sportingly agreed to be the 'poster girl' of the campaign, with a fresh take on classic wartime posters.

"I know how tough lockdown has been for local businesses," says Mayor Shattock. "Our supermarkets and their staff have done a great job of getting us through Level 4 and Level 3, but as we move to Level 2 where more of our businesses can open, we all need to do our bit to support our local businesses."

Council's Economic Development Manager Paul Bowden says the 'Spend Local' campaign will be promoted on roadside billboards in Arapuni, Tirau, Putāruru and Tokoroa. Residents will have access to 'I Spend Local', stickers and digital materials and businesses will be provided with 'Spend Local' digital materials, posters and stickers.

"We're happy to help any business that needs support with utilising these materials online or on social platforms as we navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the COVID-19 situation. Many businesses are in a battle for survival," says Mr Bowden.

Behind this will be a series of digital ads, print ads and organic material showcasing local businesses, produce and experiences available in the South Waikato, how local businesses are innovating during COVID-19 alert levels, the benefits of residents spending money locally and how suppliers and consumers can do their part.

"While this campaign starts with consumer products and services, it will work its way through other industries as it pivots to tourism dependent businesses, when we head into the July school holidays. The campaign will run for three months, with stories/materials being refreshed on a regular basis".

Mr Bowden said information and advice for business is available through www.swnz.co/covid-19response/.



Pop in at the Tirau Hub

The Tirau Community Board was keen to make it easy for people in the community to catch up with board members for a chat, raise issues, bring concerns or make suggestions, so the team are rostering on at the Tirau Hub, located at the old Tirau Library site, in the Memorial Hall. The Tirau Hub is open once a month at this stage, on the first Thursday of every month, from 10am to 12noon. *NOTE: this will start again once the COVID-19 situation is resolved.*

"Using the old Tirau Library site was suggested by Garry Brunton and we thought it was a great idea," said Kevin. "The support from Council staff to make this happen has been tremendous."

The team – Kevin, Kerry, Sharon and Holly look forward to seeing people through the doors. If the initiative becomes popular, the team could look at increasing days and times.

You can contact your TCB members via the Council website too: www.southwaikato.govt.nz. Just search for Tirau Community Board and follow the email links or phone members.



Consultation is open until Friday 22 May
Visit: www.southwaikato.govt.nz
Click on Annual Plan

WHAT'S HOT

Council holding its first ever live-stream Zoom Council meeting. The technology worked well and the participants found it an interesting experience. On average around 15 people watched the live-stream throughout, with a peak at 27 viewers.



The Spend Local campaign... now it's over to the community to SPEND LOCAL!

Business support webinars run during Alert Level 4 lockdown.

Cases of COVID-19 decreasing.

South Waikato teddy bear dog... oh and the Easter bunny too!



WHAT'S NOT



Continued dumping around the district.

Dumping outside the op shops. These are charity shops! Not a dumping ground for people to dump their rubbish!

People flouting level 4 and level 3 rules. Stick with the plan!



Keeping mobility mobile

Next time you fancy parking your vehicle in a local street over the footpath, spare a thought for people who use the footpath to get around.

By foot, it is not so much of a problem to wander round the vehicle on to the grass verge, but for people pushing prams, the elderly using walkers and mobility scooter drivers, it's a little more difficult, particularly in wet and slippery weather. To help out those in our community who have mobility concerns, let's park our cars in the street rather.

Business as usual for our CSOs

While the Level 4 Lockdown made the district look like somewhat of a ghost town, behind closed Council Office doors it has been partly business as usual for the CSOs.

The teams at the Tokoroa and Putāruru Offices have been operating in shifts to ensure that all our customers' needs are still being met.

Our population is not necessarily on Social Media or have internet access so being able to help with queries has been rewarding for our CSOs and hopefully left our customers feeling listened to.



The bulk of the calls have been about rubbish collection and landfill and although people are very keen to see the landfill open they understand the reasons for it remaining closed.

The teams are happy to receive calls and hope that they have a reassuring presence at the other end of the line.



We will remember them!

Anzac Day is one of the most important national occasions for both Australians and New Zealanders. Sadly this year for the first time in our history, Anzac Day services and the annual poppy appeal day were cancelled due to COVID-19. Although our public services didn't go ahead, it didn't stop the South Waikato from remembering and commemorating ANZAC.

This year RSA and New Zealand Defence Force sent out a call nationwide, 'Stand at Dawn. Encouraging everyone to remember those who gave their lives for our country. ANZAC is our special day to pay respect and acknowledge the many thousands of our people who are serving or have served. The theme 'Stand at Dawn' meant we all stood together but apart! We were encouraged wherever we were in the world, to stand at your letterbox, at the front door, in your lounge rooms, balconies, in your driveway and take a moment to remember our fallen.

Because the annual poppy appeal did not happen, many families got creative and decided to decorate their letterboxes and fences with homemade poppies and messages of 'We will remember them'.

So on Saturday 25 April, many New Zealanders 'Stood at Dawn' while The Last Post was played around the country, with many people commemorating ANZAC from within their bubbles.

We will remember them!

COVID and Communications

Our Customer Perceptions survey results for the last quarter showed a dramatic increase in community satisfaction with 'Keeping the public informed', increasing to 83%, a 24% increase from a low 59%.

While the previous quarter rating of 59% was unusually low, 83% satisfaction rating is also the highest achieved since 2016.

The COVID-19 situation that changed our world in late March this year is likely the driver for this increase.

Social Media

It's no surprise recent times contributed to an increase in traffic on our Facebook page. The number of new fans (likes) increased from 4,558 to now 4,733 and we've seen a 72% rise in our net likes. Our community has engaged on our page 88% more than the previous period, although we have published more posts over the last six weeks than normally, with 201 posts during the past six weeks.



"Council's Communication staff adhere to best practice guidelines regarding number of posts per day, however the COVID-19 situation certainly changed that a little," said Kerry Fabrie, Council's Communications Manager. "We tried to balance COVID messaging with normal business messaging, but some days it was certainly impossible to stick to our maximum of three posts a day; on occasion up to seven posts."

Our posts were a combination of COVID-19/Civil Defence messages, messages regarding other promotions or Council business and Council service level messages related to COVID.

The Communications team received 90 private messages through Facebook over this short period too.

"Previously, we would get roughly 90 messages over a three month timeframe, so it has been fairly intense," she continued.

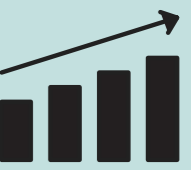
Radio

In collaboration with Tuwharetoa FM and Raukawa FM, Civil Defence organised for various community leaders to feature on radio stations nationwide to reinforce Civil Defence messaging for some of our more vulnerable people, including the elderly. Mayor Shattock has championed this weekly (30 minute) appearance and continues to reinforce all Council and Civil Defence messaging.

Council is also using Raukawa FM and Cruise FM to promote local Annual Plan messaging to its community, along with Stuff Online and Neighbourly advertising due to the South Waikato News not being printed for four weeks.

Antenno

More people in our community are installing Antenno with 1,262 devices now receiving Council messages – an increase of 117 installs over the past six weeks. During this time, we received 40 reports in 43 days, which continues to highlight the engagement and benefits people find from having Antenno readily available to use.



The main topics during the past month included street lighting (11), dumped rubbish (4), ideas to council (3), cleanup needed (3) with the remaining 14 report types being two and one reports each.

#BeKind

Unite
against
COVID-19

COMMUNITIES HEROES...Striving to protect and support!



As part of the Waikato's Lockdown Hero initiative, we're pleased to share one of our own!

Striving to protect and support the Pacific people is a challenge South Waikato Pacific Islands Community Services, Tokoroa (SWPICS) faces every day. With 200 families already on their database and as lockdown continued this database doubled and continued to rise daily.

When Prime Minister Hon. Jacinda Arden first announced the Alert Level 2, SWPICS was one of the first South Waikato organisations to activate a community-focused support service.

SWPICS staff immediately started to contact all Pacific community leaders from various churches, early childhood centres and other community organisations ensuring every Pacific family had been captured.

"We have engaged with over 320 families. Although most are predominantly Pacific, SWPICS have not refused anyone who has reached out for help," SWPICS CEO Akarere Henry said.

"Our core group of staff is coordinating and operating this assistance, while other staff is working remotely to ensure all avenues of services are covered and addressed. Thus, resulting in a combined effort ensuring SWPICS provides a determined powerhouse of outcomes.

Every day the core group of women leave our workplace exhausted; these women have sacrificed their own family priorities to serve our community day after day. Every day they come back to pack more care packages and coordinate delivery of these.

"As their CEO and leader, I am extremely proud and thankful to these beautiful women for their dedication and compassion for the community," she said. "They are the true key to our success."

SWPICS is part of a Tokoroa based Community Collective Group (CCG) that ensures we all coordinate the best possible support for our community.

Each organisation within the CCG has distributed hundreds of care packages; or has provided a range of support services during this testing time. SWPICS are extremely fortunate to have the support of Mayor Jenny Shattock on the CCG leadership team. Although the community may not see her out and about, she is working tirelessly in the background supporting the Community Collective.

Akarere mentioned, 'one of the biggest challenges was sourcing a supply of essential goods, but that's a challenge nationwide. New World Tokoroa has been amazing and fully supported our cause. They have helped source and supply all essential items we needed, meanwhile facing their own supply challenges'.

The outpouring of community support has humbled SWPICS, the communities appreciation epitomises our cultural values of looking after others before themselves. Initially, our Pacific resilience was tested; our people were very shy and reluctant to accept support especially when others were in need too. Our cultural values of love, respect and reciprocity have been so evident.

Akarere would like to share the following, "Just as our own ancestral forefathers had to navigate uncharted oceans we also have been on a journey that is best captured in the words of Jeremiah 29:11 - hope and a brighter future - today for tomorrow. We will find those new oceans together".

SWPICS would like to thank Pasifika Futures Limited Whanau Ora COVID-19 funding, this has been significant in providing the care packages and services to date. Special acknowledgement to our Board and Pacific community leaders for their support and vision of 'Caring for Pacific People.'

On behalf of the South Waikato District Council and South Waikato/ Taupō Civil Defence, we would like to thank Akarere Henry and the amazing team at South Waikato Pacific Islands Community Services for all their outstanding community efforts during the COVID-19 lockdown. #CommunityHeroes

COMMUNITIES HEROES...Coming together to help!



As part of the Waikato's Lockdown Hero initiative, we're pleased to share another of our own - Pastor Gary from Activate Church.

Communities nationwide are coming together to help one another, especially here in the South Waikato. When the Government

announced Alert Level 2 (prior to Level 4 lockdown), Pastor Gary from Activate Church in Tokoroa said, we immediately initiated a plan to help look after our members. We created a database of five sections, we then assigned church volunteers to monitor and liaison with members in each of these areas. We were able to identify their needs and address them accordingly. We also established our own Activate Church foodbank to help support whānau. The response from our church members was amazing he said.

"We have had numerous calls and offers from members to help distribute food, pickup medication, donate food or offer time to help serve our people."

It has been so successful, that when our Tokoroa Council of Social Services (TCOSS) whānau rang to see if we needed assistance, I explained we had our own foodbank and support network operating. They were amazed and immediately contacted the South Waikato/Taupo Emergency Management team. This then resulted in Activate Church being asked to help distribute Civil Defence welfare packages in the community. "Without hesitation we agreed. We are community-focussed church and believe everyone deserves a helping hand regardless of religion, race or background."

Pastor Gary said it has been so beautiful witnessing organisations coming together for the benefit of our South Waikato community.

"Every day I see organisations out and about putting the community needs before their own, I am so proud knowing we are in good hands. We all have a common purpose, serve the people! I must admit I was surprised and truly humbled to be called a community hero, because in my heart we are all community heroes! Activate Church gives all glory to Jesus Messiah."

On behalf of the South Waikato District Council and South Waikato/ Taupo Civil Defence team we would like to thank Pastor Gary and the Activate Church, Tokoroa for all their outstanding efforts during the COVID-19 lockdown. #CommunityHeroes

Affected by COVID-19?

South Waikato ratepayers can apply for rates payment arrangements with Council to assist over coming months.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact this has had on our economy, South Waikato District Council knows these are difficult times and that the arrival of ratepayers' fourth rates instalment, due for payment on 8 June 2020, may be a concern. But there is help!

"We can offer several options for those ratepayers who are struggling with job losses or other pressures because of the pandemic," said Mayor Jenny Shattock.

Martin Warren, Council's Revenue Manager said that

Central Government offers a Rates Rebate Scheme that our Council administers and encourages people to contact one of our team on 07 885 0340 to discuss if there are opportunities under this scheme.

"Rates Payment Arrangements including deferred payment dates are another option," continued Mr Warren. "We already have a number of ratepayers on payment plans."

Mr Warren stressed that the key with rates payment arrangements is that ratepayers must contact Council to discuss and implement a payment plan.

"It is important that you contact us before the due date for payment," he advises.

This can be done by:

- using the Rates Payment Arrangement application form on our website at this link: www.southwaikato.govt.nz/our-services/rates.
- calling us on phone us on 07 885 0340
- emailing us at rates@southwaikato.govt.nz. Please write Rates Payment Arrangement in the subject bar.

Council can tailor a payment arrangement to suit individual ratepayers.

Ratepayers can also register to receive information about new or changed COVID-19 related financial information.

Even if people are able to pay their rates at present, they can use the Rates Payment Arrangement application form to register their interest in receiving information in the future that may be of relevance. Just type 'information only' in the 'Additional Information' box.

"Council can then notify you about next year's rates rebate criteria, and of any policy changes or new Government initiatives as we hear about them," he concluded.

Unite
against
COVID-19



COMMUNITIES HEROES... busy during the lockdown!

While things have slowed down for many over the past month, the same can't be said for Council's Animal Control and Compliance team.

A busier than usual Easter period with the rise in the number of dogs being impounded on top of liaising with freedom campers, erecting signs across the district along with many other tasks. This has been the new norm in recent weeks for the team.

Despite the increased workload, Animal and Compliance Manager Kerry Beckett felt her team has handled these additional tasks with an awesome 'can do' attitude and were happy to help the community through the Civil Defence coordination process in any way they could.

"The team has been so positive from the start of all this. They have just got the job done," she said.

As everyone can agree on, this situation is an absolute first for everyone. For Beckett, she was so heartened at how well the entire council has pulled together.

Being on the front line her team had no definitive blueprint to go by, but have adapted seamlessly. Beckett credits having

experienced and long standing officers, who know what is needed to be done.

As for their day to day duties, Beckett believes the challenges are relatively the same as they were pre-Covid19 but are continuing to thrive despite the circumstances.

The straight-shooting Beckett also wanted to remind our communities that dogs are in lockdown as well. There is a zero tolerance approach to any dogs that are roaming and owners will either have their dog impounded or they will receive a \$300 Infringement – no excuses.

Lastly, be prepared for when you return to work and kids go back to school. When everything slowly returns to normal, remember that your dog will need to adjust too. Try to keep things as routine for them as you can.

Otherwise, they will probably end up having to meet someone from the Compliance Team, but let's hope not.

Like the many heroes we've seen in our communities during these times, thank you Kerry and your team for your ongoing efforts during the Alert Level 4 lockdown.

Stop bad burning

Air quality in Tokoroa needs to improve. Tokoroa's air quality is an ongoing issue throughout the winter months. The level of dirty air is too high, particularly during winter when we use our wood burners. Dirty air is caused when we use old fires and what we burn inside them (ie. wet, painted or treated wood, even rubbish). This nasty smoke is harming us all, in fact the health status of people living in Tokoroa. You can help, by burning only dry, seasoned wood, keeping your wood burner and flue clean, not burning treated, painted, green or wet wood, plywood or particle board, or recyclables.

Better burning tips

- Start the fire with newspaper and kindling (pinecones work well as well, and firelighters are good too).

- Keep air vent open so that your fire burns brightly.
- Split wood to around 15cm thick.
- Only use larger pieces once the fire is well established.
- Do not overload your wood burner.
- Before winter, check your flue chimney and get it cleaned.
- Avoid turning down your burner overnight; some people call this 'banking' or 'damping'; a slow smouldering fire creates air pollution and clogs your flue. Burning dry wood also reduces the number of times you need to clean your chimney or flue.

And the best tip of all...only burn seasoned dry wood!

Check out our Warm Home Clean Air initiative for more information on wood suppliers, funding and initiatives in the South Waikato www.southwaikato.govt.nz



Wastewater education begins to ramp up.

As more of our whanau are at home during this lock down period. We kindly remind residents in our urban townships to flush disposable wipes down our toilets. Some may note they are flushable but are sadly not.

They can block up our pipes and create a mess. Please help our water services team by refraining from disposing of wet wipes down toilets. We kindly ask you bin them instead.

The consequences of residents doing this, is when they

accumulate they block the sewer pipes which creates sewerage overflows which isn't nice for anyone.

Wipes also cause problems when they become lodged on the inner surface of wastewater pipes and become a catching point for fats, grease and oils. As further products become caught the size of the blockage increases until it interferes with the amount of wastewater able to pass through the pipe and damage to the system occurs.

This is a cost to us, the Ratepayer, and to our environment that we can avoid.



What a splash!



The Doggie Pool Party at the Tirau pool was another huge success. Dogs of all shapes and sizes, swimming abilities, graceful agility vs the odd clumsy and amusing moments... what a fantastic afternoon. So to Leo, Angus, Nelly, Suzie, Daisy, Montana, Whiskey, Gizmo, Stella, Jess and other dogs that arrived after the photographer left,

we hope you had a good time.

The Dog Pool parties was introduced last year by Council following the closure of its seasonal pools to people. Dog Pool parties are held around the country by other councils and they are always very well received by our community.

It gives the dogs a great opportunity to socialise,

exercise and dog what dogs do best which is tear around the place like lunatics all after the same Frisbee!

After the season is closed, we stop dosing as much chlorine for a week, hold the dog pool parties and then empty the pools for winter, ready for the next summer season.

In Touch 50th issue quiz

Awesome effort to everyone who participated in our 50th issue celebration multiple choice quiz.

The winner was Maureen who co-incidently lives near the Maureen Siepolt Reserve!

The answers are below:

1. What date was the first ever issue of In Touch?
Answer: B - December 2011/January 2012
2. What regular column in In Touch has been included in every issue ever produced?
Answer: A - What's Hot
3. What image is used in the banner of In Touch?
Answer: A - Te Puna (Blue Spring)
4. How many issues of In Touch a year do we publish?
Answer: C - six
5. When did South Waikato District Council celebrate its 30th birthday?
Answer: C - 2019
6. How many Mayors have led South Waikato District Council?
Answer: C - three
7. How many staff currently (as at 16 January) work for South Waikato District Council?
Answer: C - 175
8. How many marae are mandated to the Raukawa Settlement Trust?
Answer: C - 16
9. What was the original name given to Tirau?
Answer: A - Oxford
10. How long is the Waikato River trails?
Answer: C - 103km
11. What is the length of the Arapuni suspension bridge?
Answer: C - 152m
12. What is the name of the talking pole located at the round-about near the skatepark?
Answer: C - Reflections



SWDC applies for \$60 million from government for post-covid projects

South Waikato District Council has applied to Crown Infrastructure Partners (CIP) for \$60 million across a range of large infrastructure projects to be actioned post-COVID lockdown.

In response to moving beyond the COVID-19 lockdown period, Central Government is providing funding to deliver significant financial stimulus across the economy and develop employment opportunities for a workforce that has lost jobs as a result of COVID-19.

Our Council is working to make sure our district and community don't miss out.

"Council staff have worked tirelessly over the past two weeks to develop applications and proposals amounting to \$60 million," said Ben Smit, Council's Chief Executive. "We want to be sure that the smaller councils in the regions – especially our own – aren't overlooked in favour of the major metropolitans."

"The South Waikato has shown steady and strong economic growth since 2015. The impact of COVID-19 must be minimised to ensure that our district recovers more quickly than we did from the global financial crisis of 2008," said Mayor Jenny Shattock. "We've worked hard over the past four years to move our economy into an upward swing. This work continues in earnest now."

Mayor Shattock believes that financial assistance from Central Government is critical to the South Waikato's continued success as we work together to pull through the current pandemic crisis.

The projects that Council has applied for funding assistance with include:

- Infrastructure development to support residential and business development in Putāruru, specifically the three waters infrastructure to deliver growth identified in the Putāruru Concept Plan.
- Tirau Domain accessibility enablement project to ensure safe and universal access to the domain facilities for the Tirau and wider community.
- Swimming pool network upgrades and safety improvements to enhance user experience at the district's pool facilities without increasing user charges.
- Wastewater treatment plant upgrades and wetland development throughout district to deliver significant improvements to water quality in the upper Waikato and Waihou River catchment, while maintaining cultural values.
- Maraetai Road Intermodal Business Park (MRIBP) to develop and deliver an industrial zoned park adjoining the Tokoroa Road Rail Terminal.



Mr Smit said that while Council will be co-funding these projects through existing budgets in the Long Term Plan, funding from the CIP to accelerate project delivery, will mean we won't end up with unaffordable increases in rates and debt.

"This Government funding is critical to provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the district to realise environmental, social and economic benefits, as your Council seeks to support the South Waikato communities through the recovery phase of Covid-19," concluded Mayor Shattock.



Photo: Jenny Shattock, Isaac Boss, Mary Jensen

FutureForce Expo

More than 120 local employers, educators and youth-employment transition stakeholders filled the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre to capacity in Tokoroa prior to lockdown.

Supported by South Waikato District Council, Smart Waikato's FutureForce® Action Network (FAN) event was opened by Mayor Jenny Shattock urging local employers to get involved in the region-wide initiative to reduce local youth unemployment and do their part to secure a strong skills pipeline for the district.

Those attending were inspired by the stories of young employees and employer champions from Tokoroa building company Alan Wilson Builders and Putaruru's Van Dyks Flooring Xtra.

"If you wait for the right time to grow an oak tree, you're already too late. You need to plant the acorn now," Richard Stephens, of Van Dyks, said.

Attendees heard about best practice associated with guiding, developing and retaining youth through work and work-related training, and received free FAN tools to support youth employment strategies.

During the event, more than 50 local employers pledged 96 new workplace opportunities including 17 jobs, 1 scholarship, 7 internships, 11 cadetships, 17 apprenticeships, 18 mentoring offers and 25 work experience opportunities.

Smart Waikato's South Waikato-based Education and Employment Pathways Manager Isaac Boss is encouraging local employers to attend the free follow up FAN Activate workshop on March 18th, 9-1pm in Tokoroa with lunch included. Employers will be given guidance on working through the tools to, to create bespoke workplace opportunities to young people. RSVP to maddie@smartwaikato.co.nz.

Smart Waikato's suite of FAN Resources help employers develop best-practice youth-focused work experience, internships, apprenticeships, cadetships and jobs. Membership to FAN is free to all Waikato employers, educators, government and community organisations. For more information visit: www.smartnz.nz



**Install Antenno
FREE Report issues
to Council**

**Receive messages
From Council**




Councillor Alex Jansen

Firstly, I would like to thank everybody for their ongoing support as a first-time district Councillor. It is an honour and a privilege being elected.

With COVID-19 bringing our country to a standstill, I would like to say a massive thank you to all essential workers who have worked so hard during the lockdown to keep our district going. Your work is greatly appreciated.

With COVID-19 leaving families in the unknown about their jobs/businesses, Council decided to go with a 0% average rates revenue increase for 2020-21, giving many of our ratepayers a little relief so they don't have to worry about this as an extra cost in these challenging times.

We have many projects going on around our district, with the Tokoroa CBD upgrade taking shape, the Putāruru Growth plan and the Tirau Domain Upgrade. The completion of these projects will greatly benefit the district.

We have many walkways and bike trails for tourists and locals to use as the lockdown levels drop.

Cougar Park has become a hotspot for mountain bikers, Te Waihou Walkway continues to be a popular walk and the Waikato River Trails are still well used.

To keep up to date with projects, roadworks and other updates from Council, I would encourage you to download the Council app Antenno.

Using Antenno, you can also request for services to be done, such as notifying staff of graffiti or potholes.

I look forward to seeing our district continue to grow.

Councillor Peter Schulte

At the time of writing we were still at Alert Level 3, but I am hoping we will be moving to Level 2 very soon.

During lockdown, Councillor Sandra Wallace and I checked on our elderly in Putāruru and Tirau once or twice a week to make sure they were doing alright.

I spent the past weeks distributing food parcels from the South Waikato Social Services and the YMCA, helping to get our elderly to the doctors and get their prescriptions. Being able to help them during these unusual times has been immensely rewarding for me.

ANZAC day was a bit different this year and together with Tirau Community Board (TCB) members Kerry Purdy and Kevin Slater, we commemorated the last post at 6am beside the Tirau Memorial Hall. It was misty and magical and I would like to - thank everyone, especially Doreen Steiner who read the ANZAC poem.

Now to this dreaded virus. I like to thank everyone in our community who have kept to their physical distancing and other alert level guidance. Given our leisure equipment was out of bounds, it was pleasing to see that only a few people flouted the rules and used the basketball hoop down at the Okoroire Park... I did notice they took off when they saw me coming! The upper and lower Tirau Domain was well used by walkers with and without dogs. More to come in the coming year on that project, so keep an eye out for updates.

All I can say is, let's all look to the future and make the best of it whatever it may be. That's it from me and stay safe, stay strong, kia kaha.

IN brief

- Council continues to plan for recovery through the COVID-19 situation. We will work with our community and businesses community through these plans in coming months. Recovery is likely to be a key focus on our next Long Term Plan (LTP).
- There were 117 new Antenna installs over the lockdown period.
- Growth modelling has started in Tokoroa and Tirau as part of Council's district growth planning strategy. 374 building consent applications have been received for the 2019-20 year to 22 April, with an average of just under six days to process and grant building consents with a total value of \$31.7 million.
- The Animal Control and Compliance team responded to 92 issues under our various bylaws during the lockdown period with the bulk involving rural reserve patrols.

IN the know

You can keep up to date with council information via:

www.southwaikato.govt.nz

[www.facebook/
SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil)

Download Antenna FREE

or email
info@southwaikato.govt.nz

IN view

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email contact: kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz

Councillor Arama Ngapo-Lipscombe

'Be safe, be kind and we will get through this together' is a catch phrase I championed during Covid-19 lockdown. The emotional and financial stress this crisis has had on our District will be enormous. As we progress through the levels to eventually Level 1 I hope we as Councillors, your elected members have exercised kindness and leadership at every opportunity. As communication is difficult during Covid-19 I decided early on to share my views and thoughts via social media. The hope was I could remain connected to the community and you would know that I as an elected member am still here for you.

Much credit must be given to our Council staff who have worked tirelessly to ensure that as many Council services as possible remained on task. The restrictions and challenges Council faced are similar to those experienced by local businesses. It is heartening to see businesses adjusting to Level 3 and continue their services and to see the many social media posts of families spending quality time together and making the best out of lockdown.

A sadder side of lockdown meant organisations working in the community are stretched to capacity. Essential workers who sometimes are as 'unessential' worked tirelessly to care for us. For the first time in my history ANZAC was celebrated at our letter boxes. For those of us that lost loved ones during this time promises were made to meet and remember our loved ones when we are able. Despite all challenges, I know that South Waikato will emerge stronger and braver. We will buy local, we will be kind, we will get through this together. Thank you South Waikato.

Councillor Hans Nelis

Governance is a serious job and as a new councillor for the Putaruru Ward I have been through a crash course in understanding all our duties and responsibilities. There are a lot of issues coming to the table, and currently we are discussing the funding for the next three years and how this will affect the rates.

I was part of a council delegation that attended a Local Government NZ meeting recently in Tauranga, and the CEO Malcolm Alexander did not mince his words. He gave examples of councils that have not done their legal duty for their residents, in regards to the essential trio, drinking water, storm water and wastewater. SWDC has an aging underground infrastructure that requires more upgrades to comply with national standards. I want a modern council with the essential services in good order, meaning that in our case I will pay special attention to waste and storm water compliance. Council is the primary caretaker for the aforementioned services plus footpaths, roading, drinking water and solid waste collection.

During my campaign I emphasised prudent financial management, trust, fairness and sustainability and I endeavour to achieve these goals.

The Covid crisis has delivered painful blows to some people. As a community we need to stand together; NZ Inc has improved its global image after the resolute action of this Government and this should bode well for the prosperity of our agricultural and horticultural sectors.

I'll finish with words from Friedrich Nietzsche, there will always be rocks in the road ahead of us. They will be stumbling blocks or stepping stones; it all depends on how you use them.



Mayor Jenny Shattock

0274 416 230
Jenny.Shattock
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)

Tokoroa Ward



Bill Machen
Deputy Mayor

0274 715 899
Bill.Machen
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)



Arama Ngapo-Lipscombe

0275 339 988
Arama.
Ngapo-Lipscombe
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)



Thomas Lee

0273 321 292
Thomas.Lee
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)



Marin Glucina

0210 284 3214
Marin.Glucina
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)



Hamish Daine

021 125 9225
Hamish.Daine
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)



Alex Jansen

0279 581 906
Alex.Jansen
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)

Putaruru Ward



Sandra Wallace

0210 291 3702
Sandra.Wallace
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)



Hans Nelis

0210 552 306
Hans.Nelis
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)



Gary Petley

0274 836 809
Gary.Petley
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)

Tirau Ward



Peter Schulte

021 434 933
Peter.Schulte
[@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:info@southwaikato.govt.nz)