

Community Board News and Views

Matamata Community Board

By Daryl Anderson

Young people seeking mentors to help build self worth

With tragic reason for being concerned about our community's troubled teens, the Community Board and Police would like to set up a community service programme where those starting to come off the tracks can undertake community work under the close supervision of those with wisdom and a caring nature that young people respond too. If you are willing to mentor and have appropriate work in mind, please contact Judy on 027 332 2711.

Wildflowers

The wildflowers on the entrances to Matamata have once again proved to be very successful with many comments from locals and overseas visitors. According to Eric Jackson from Hobbiton Tours, many of his overseas visitors have been most

impressed. The whole process will start again in May in time for a spring flowering once again in 2009. This beautiful display has been achieved through the sterling efforts of volunteers offering their time and machinery. Thanks to Bernie Van Heuven and Murray Wilson in particular, and also all of the people who have been mowing around the beds all down the Waharoa Straight and on Hinuera Road.

Broadway Streetscape

It's great to now finally enjoy the finished layout and plantings down both sides of Broadway after much lobbying, submissions, and presentations by the Board. Our town is one to be proud of, so let's ensure it stays that way by keeping things clean and sparkling!

From your Board

Daryl, Robin, Judy and Bernie

Morrinsville Community Board

By Ann Linstrom

The Morrinsville Community Board needs the input of the public to perform efficiently. The members have very scattered interests across the community. Those that we don't reach are usually the ones that we need to have contact with so that their ideas to enhance our board area may be taken into

consideration when discussions on our future are mooted. To this end I invite you to ring me during business hours on (07) 889 6922 for a chat or to arrange a time to meet with you or your organisation.

Ann Linstrom, Chairperson

Morrinsville Community Board

Te Aroha Community Board

By Teena Cornes

What is a Community Board?

Community Boards were created by the local government reforms in 1989. Some 143 community boards now operate in both urban and rural areas within local authorities throughout New Zealand. They carry out functions and exercise those powers delegated to them by their councils. The board members are people voted into their positions during the local elections.

The purpose of a Community Board is to:

- Represent and act as an advocate for the interests of the community.
- Consider and report on any matter/s referred to it by the territorial local authority, and any issues of interest to the community board.

- Make an annual submission to the territorial local authority on expenditure in the local authority.
- Maintain an overview of services provided by the territorial authority within the community.
- Communicate with organisations and special interest groups in the community, and undertake any other responsibilities delegated by the local authority.

In order to achieve this, Community Boards meet on a monthly basis and encourage members of the public to attend these meetings. Public forums are held at the beginning of each meeting where anyone is entitled to address the board and share their concerns or achievements. We also encourage people to simply observe these meetings and welcome anyone who would like to attend.

Get Bike Wise

February is Bike Wise month and cycling is a great way to get around as it keeps you fit and healthy, it's cheaper and cleaner than driving, and its fun!

Go by bike to work or school on 18 February in Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha and enjoy a free Bike Wise Breakfast. Check out details on this and more Bike Wise Fun in your local paper or contact Ruth Stanley, Sport Waikato on 07 880 9088 or ruths@sportwaikato.org.nz.

Lions donate picnic table

The Morrinsville Lions have generously donated a large Macrocarpa picnic table for the enjoyment of the Morrinsville Community and its visitors. The table has been placed in Murray Oaks Reserve off State Highway 26, to be enjoyed by many people who stop and picnic in this beautiful reserve.

Compact fluorescent lights

Compact Florescent Lights (also known as energy saving light bulbs) can be disposed of at transfer stations in the district. These lights contain a small amount of mercury, so they need to be disposed of in the special boxes provided at the transfer stations. They will then be sent away to have the mercury removed and the glass ground up and recycled into other products.

Council In Focus



Your district update from Matamata-Piako District Council

Smart water use

Councils in the Waikato region are working together to help conserve water with the Smartwateruse campaign. Last summer's drought was a strong reminder that we can't take our freshwater resources for granted.



Council encourages residents to conserve water now, before it's too late as the probability of another drought is quite high. "Water Watch signs are up in Morrinsville to show the current water situation, and we encourage residents to keep an eye on these," says Infrastructure Manager George Ridley. "Hosing and sprinkler bans may once again be actioned if water levels become low."

Remember there are lots of things you can do around the home to help save water this summer – fix those leaking taps or hoses, turn off the tap when you're not using it, don't leave hoses running unattended, take shorter showers, use the half flush option on your toilet if it has one, run appliances such as your dishwasher and washing machine on the short cycle when possible and water your gardens at night when your plants will benefit most. We can all do our bit to help conserve water.

Our Community, Our Future



Community Outcomes are your visions for the future of our community. The Our Community, Our Future Plan outlines what Council is planning for the next ten years, and how those plans contribute to these outcomes.

This plan is currently being reviewed, and in September last year Council asked for the community's thoughts on the major issues through an insert in local papers; these included managing growth, water management, sustainability of services such as libraries, pools and roads, the ageing population, and Council's overseas investment.

Council received a record response from the community, with around 600 people providing their thoughts on the big issues. "This level of feedback from the community is excellent," says Mayor Hugh Vercoe. "The results have provided Council with information to debate what the major works for the next ten years may or may not be, and to prioritise where money should be spent."

Council will make their decisions on these this month, to include in the ten year plan. The draft Our Community, Our Future Plan will be available from Council offices and libraries, and at www.mpdcc.govt.nz in April 2009. Make sure you take an active role in the future of your community by reading the plan and letting Council know what you think.

Significant Natural Features Fund

Council has a 'Significant Natural Features Fund' where landowners who have a significant site such as a wetland and/or native bush area can apply for a rates remission and/or funding towards fencing the site and project costs.

In September Council advertised the annual funding round and three applications for both rates remissions and project costs were received. In December, Council approved all three applications and granted over \$19,000 in total for fencing and project costs and over \$1,700 worth of rates remissions.

These areas were strands of native bush and indigenous vegetation which are to be protected through covenants such as the QEII Trust. This means the areas remain protected for the long term.

"It's great to see landowners getting involved in protecting significant sites in our community," says Community Development Manager Paula Rolfe. The funding round will be advertised again in September 2009.

For more information phone Customer Services on 0800 746 467.

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contact us

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Mayor's message



Christmas and the festive season are over and for all of us it is now back to business. I could say "back to business as usual" but the current economic climate, both in New Zealand and indeed throughout the world is far from usual. While there is a great deal of uncertainty out there I am well aware of the growing financial strain on many in our community.

Council needs to respond to these financial pressures and the first thing we have done is look in detail at all our budgets. The objective has been "how can we reduce costs but still deliver the same service levels to our community?" We have identified several small areas where savings can be made. Nothing big individually, but put them all together and we can make savings.

Our business plans and budgets for the next three years reflect Council's philosophy that now is the not the time for expansion with corresponding large rate increases. It is indeed a time to tighten our belts and to look carefully at every dollar we spend.

We also want to get the message out to any ratepayers who may have very tight financial constraints. When you receive your rates invoice for the next three months, please don't ignore it but call into one of our offices and discuss the matter confidentially with our rates team. There are various ways of managing the account and if we can get a smaller regular payment system in place, automatic penalties may be avoided.

We will shortly adopt our draft Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) and we will be seeking your submissions on this. Please take the opportunity to tell us where you think we should cut back on services, or what you consider is really important but not included in our budgets.

Hugh Vercoe
Mayor

Progress at Te Aroha Domain

In November volunteers from St Joseph's School, Te Aroha Primary School, Te Aroha College, and Te Aroha Lions helped Council to replant the area in the Te Aroha Domain between the Mineral Spas and the Cottage Café. This area was previously cleared of privet and other menacing vegetation.

"The work of all the volunteers was greatly appreciated," says Community Facilities Manager Steve Fabish. "Council will

continue this work during 2009, working with the Te Aroha Domain Care Group in the coming months to plan further eco-sourced planting above the Geyser and the Lower Domain Track."

The planting links in with the geyser upgrade and improved wheelchair access to the geyser area that was completed in 2008. Fencing of the rear of the spa facility has also been completed.



Ministry of Health reminder

The Ministry of Health has re-issued the following public notice:

"Some plumbing fittings have the potential to allow minute traces of metals to accumulate in water standing in the fittings for several hours. Although the risk is small, the Ministry of Health recommends that you flush a cupful of water from your drinking-water tap each morning before use to remove any metals that may have dissolved from the plumbing fittings. We are recommending this simple precaution

for all house holds, including those on public and private water supplies."

In accordance with Ministry of Health recommendations Matamata-Piako District Council is issuing this statement as a reminder to its residents. This is not necessary for households using drinking water filters.

For more information visit the Ministry of Health website www.moh.govt.nz.

New Zealand Post codes

New Zealand Post has updated its postcode and address standards. In order to ensure that Council's records comply with the new standards, minor changes may have been made to your postal address, particularly in regards to the postcode or the layout. Please contact our Customer Services staff if you require further information. You can find more about the new standards at www.nzpost.co.nz.

Building Warrant of Fitness



As a local authority we are required to enforce fire and safety standards in commercial buildings in our district. Council have started to audit those buildings with a Building Warrant of Fitness to ensure that they comply with the appropriate standards, and that owners are doing what they should when it comes to building safety standards.

"These audits are Council's legal responsibility," says Environmental Services Manager Dennis Bellamy, "they help building owners to remain compliant with standards and ensure the safety of all users."

Waste education

Matamata-Piako District Council is introducing two new waste minimisation programmes into our schools during 2009.

The 'Zero Waste' and 'Paper4Trees' education programmes have been designed to educate children in a fun but very informative way about sustainability and protecting our environment through reducing, reusing, recycling and composting our waste, conserving our water and reducing their family's 'footprint'.

The Zero Waste programme is taught each year by a specialist teacher who visits the school, working with children from year three up to year eight, so the children complete six units by the time they leave primary and intermediate school. The programme will be introduced in July 2010, with all 27 schools in the district being visited this year to confirm their participation. This programme is gaining popularity throughout New Zealand, with positive feedback from the teachers, students and parents who are already been involved.

Wastewater updates

Septic tanks can pose a health risk – particularly in township areas where there is poor drainage. For the health and wellbeing of the community, Council is working on sewerage schemes in both Tahuna and Waharoa.

Work began on the Tahuna Sewerage Scheme in January. This scheme involves the building of a new wastewater treatment plant and connections for the Tahuna community, who until now have been on septic tanks.

The contractor will keep affected landowners informed of progress, including the proposed work schedules and time frames, and contact details for any queries. The work is hoped to be completed by July.

Council is also beginning the process of reticulating Waharoa sewerage, and is currently consulting with the Waharoa community. Once there is sufficient community support, Council can formally apply to the government for funding and begin the planning and construction process.

Residents of Tahuna and Waharoa please remember to complete and return the forms you have recently received from Council.

Tough times ahead?

Did you know that there are a number of different ways you can pay your rates so that you don't end up with a large lump sum every three months?

During the current tough economic times paying a lump sum for rates may seem more difficult. We offer a number of different payment options to help spread the payments and avoid getting into difficulties. It often surprises people how we can structure payments to suit their circumstances, so get in contact with Council's Rates team to find out what your options are.

If you have any concerns about not being able to make a payment, or if your personal circumstances change through loss of employment, then you should contact Council's Rates team as soon as possible. We can discuss how best to deal with your situation and try to arrange payment options to suit your needs.



The Paper4Trees programme will be introduced into Matamata-Piako schools from February. This programme is designed to encourage schools to recycle paper and cardboard, which make up about 75% of school waste. This is a Carbon Zero Programme, meaning schools earn native trees to plant by recycling paper and cardboard. Thirty five percent of New Zealand schools (863 schools) are already involved in this programme.

"The impact of these programmes on children is very positive," says Mayor Hugh Vercoe. "It teaches them to be concerned about the environment and encourages those around them to do the same, protecting it for future generations."

For more information on either of these programmes contact Council's Waste Management Officer on 07 884 0060.

The role of the auditor

The Auditor has a very important role on behalf of Council and the community to ensure that Council is conducting business in a lawful and transparent way.

Audit New Zealand come into Council several times throughout the year to audit the financial statements contained in the Long-Term Council Community Plan, Annual Plan and Annual Report. They also look at our core activities and our targets, and measure how we are performing. This audit gives ratepayers confidence that Council is preparing financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.



Refuse Transfer Stations

Open from 10:00AM to 4:00PM
on selected days

MATAMATA

Mangawhero Road, ph (07) 888 5700
Open: Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat, Sun

MORRINSVILLE

Roache Road, ph (07) 889 3401
Open: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Sat, Sun

WAIHOU

State Highway 26, ph (07) 884 8831
Open: Wed, Fri, Sun