



Ōpōtiki District Council
STRONG COMMUNITY STRONG FUTURE

Pānui

Issue 94 // July 2023



Keeping you up to date with Ōpōtiki District Council

From the mayor

I have been making a few visits in recent weeks to Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs subsidy recipients and their places of employment. It has been great to see the difference that these jobs and apprenticeships are making in so many industries. We have a high number of apprenticeships for a small district, and it is something we should be very proud of.

You may have seen a bit of news coverage on the release of the **Future for Local Government Report**. The report highlights many challenges and possible changes for local government and if you have a little bit of time to read it, it is quite thought-provoking and wide-ranging.

While Ōpōtiki voter turnout rates are higher than the national average, there is always room for improvement. Four-year terms, a lower voting age and voter apathy are not just local government issues and I think that any changes to these things need to be aligned nationally and locally. We also need to acknowledge that more and more is being asked of local government without funding to help pay for that. It isn't sustainable that the costs keep falling to ratepayers and I look forward to seeing more honest discussion in this space.

David Moore – Ōpōtiki Mayor



New playground at Whitikau

Have you had an opportunity to check out the new playground in Whitikau Reserve yet? It is alongside the ever-popular skatepark and pump track just off Potts Ave.

A huge thanks to the tamariki who helped us design their dream space and our parks and reserves team who turned it into reality. Have you noticed the design on the matting that reflects our very own rivers joining and heading out to sea?

This playground adds to the area which already has seating, CCTV and lighting, wharepaku, a new parking area (popular venue for recent night markets), and barbeques. This space will also be a new entryway into the Motu Trails with new waharoa to be installed and blessed as part of our Matariki celebrations.

We are very grateful to our funders: Better Off Funding, Trust Horizon, development contributions from new housing developments, and the much-appreciated ongoing support from Kānoa.



Coast communities! There are more recreational spaces and ideas coming your way soon too! Council is working with the Coast Community Board and Te Whānau ā Apanui on the next best steps to get our reserves up the Coast looking amazing as well. In particular, there is \$200k of Better Off Funding set aside for a Waihou Bay Masterplan and we have Coast reserve contributions (the ones from new developments) that are to be spent out east as well. Watch this space!

Playground photos courtesy of the Ōpōtiki News

For further information, visit www.odc.govt.nz



HARBOUR UPDATE

This drone shot of Pakihikura at high tide shows just how close the Harbour Team is to the biggest milestone we've celebrated to date – opening the channel between the seawalls for the new river mouth. The moment the river starts flowing between the walls is expected to be on 24 July, depending on the weather and other factors.

It is still a very busy and active worksite, so there won't be an event or celebratory bubbles on site just yet! But HEB will have a drone up to capture the process of cutting through and there will be karakia and a blessing to mark the occasion. Keep an eye out for that incredible video later this month.

Construction and dredging will continue well into 2024 to close the current channel and all the final works, so the hard-working crews aren't going anywhere just yet.



Spaces and places at the wharf

Back in 2022, we had amazing public engagement about the community vision for the public spaces around Pakihikura, the wharf, Snell Road and links into town. We even had some intrepid tamariki come into council to present their views to councillors. That helped us develop the Harbour-Wharf Masterplan.

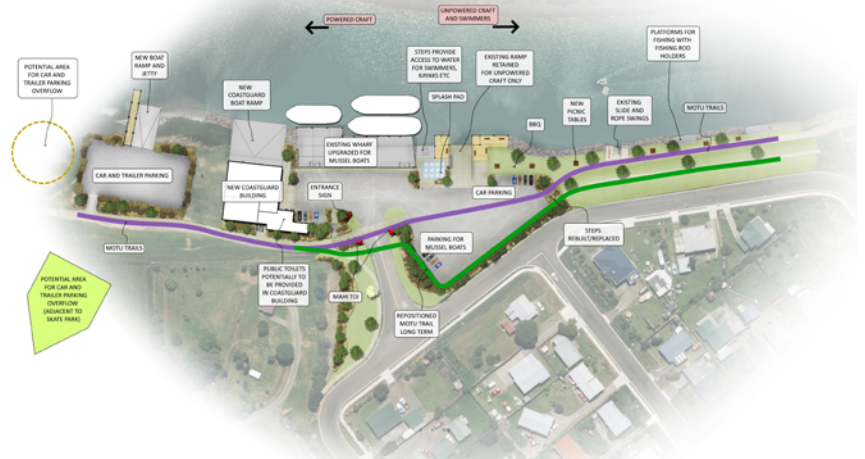
With the harbour on track to have a channel running between the new seawalls this month, we are looking into an interim solution that may allow mussel boats to use the town wharf for loading, unloading and wharfage, maintenance and other industrial use until the commercial marina is available (subject to funding, consent and timeframes).

This changes somewhat the vision in the harbour wharf masterplan so we have recently been asking for feedback on what this means for the Masterplan. While feedback has officially closed, you might be able to add some late feedback if you didn't already have a chance to have your say. Get in touch with council to find out more.

Matariki

Ōpōtiki has been celebrating Matariki for many years and this year was as big and bright as ever! This Panui will land in letterboxes about the same time as Matariki events. Did you stargaze before dawn or celebrate at the skatepark? Share kai with whānau or music and a quiz night?

There is an incredible calendar of events through to 22 July. Talk to the amazing team at the i-SITE or visit opotikin.z.com to find out more.



Video corner



Ōpōtiki has been (almost) famous with several excellent videos on the tele and social media lately.

Did you see the Think Rural campaign? Or the awesome episode of Rural Delivery?



Shona Browne and community members plant a tree

Coronation 2023

It is a bit of a tradition to plant a tree when a new monarch is crowned (although it's a while since we had needed to do so!). When Charles III was crowned in May, Ōpōtiki District Council joined the national initiative- He Rā Rākau Tītapu and planted a native tree to mark the occasion.

Thanks to Deputy Mayor, Shona Browne, who took the opportunity to acknowledge the occasion and the contribution of volunteers across the community. What a better way to celebrate than with a delicious scone or two.



Tree of the year

Sadly, Taketakerau didn't win Tree of the Year, Rākau Momori on the Chatham Islands was the recipient of that honour. But it is still one of our most popular tourist destinations and hundreds of locals and visitors wander through the Hukutaia Domain each year. Huge thanks to the Hukutaia Domain Care Group who do so much to keep that beautiful space looking its green best.

Speed Management

Across the country, the way that councils manage speed limits is changing. We're moving to safer and more appropriate speeds, to reduce the harm and injury caused by accidents and so we all get where we need to go in one piece.

It will take time across New Zealand and here in Ōpōtiki to move to these safer speeds. But there are some things we can do now to make our streets safer – particularly around our schools, marae and busy pedestrian areas. We have drafted an Interim Speed Management Plan that sets out what we hope to do straight away to help protect our most vulnerable road users.

You can read the plan and provide your feedback by 21 July.

Dog rego due

Dog registrations for this year are now due and you should have received your registration notice in the mail.

If the details on your notice are correct, you can save time and a trip to our office by paying online and we can post the tags out to you. Other ways to pay are listed on your registration notice and our website.

Please pay by the end of July to avoid late payment penalties.



Planning for the Long Term

Council has already started work on next year's Long Term Plan (LTP) and you'll hear more about this in the coming months.

The LTP lists Council's activities for the next 10 years and covers everything we do and how we pay for it. It sets the budget for the next decade, but it gets reviewed every three years. Our next one will come out next year.

As we develop this plan, individuals and organisations all get to have their say on what they think should be council's direction, priorities, programmes and budgets. It is a good time to start thinking about this and the role you think council should play in community growth and development well into the future. Chat with your councillors or keep an eye out for how you can help us set the direction our community takes now and until the 2030s!



DISCOVER
YOUR IMPACT
ON THE PLANET

Get Future Fit

FutureFit is a fun way to get real about climate change and take action to reduce your carbon footprint.

It is a fun free tool that shares practical information on how you and your household can cut down your emissions a little bit at a time. Thousands of people and organisations around the country are signed up to FutureFit. You can join a team and compete and you can see your daily changes making a difference to our planet.

www.futurefit.nz

Meet the newest member of the team

If you have been into Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi lately, you may have met Mahuika, the new Emblaser 2 that is part of our Maker Space. Mahuika can engrave and cut a range of materials using a laser. You can see how we have been using it around Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi on signage and other places.

The Maker Space is all about sharing resources and opening new opportunities with pieces of technology like this one. So if you have a neat idea to try out or want to make a special gift for someone, come down and talk to the team. You'll need to bring an appropriate material to work with and there is a small charge to help cover costs.



Fees and charges are changing

Thanks to all those who took the time to provide feedback on the 2023/24 Annual Plan that was adopted at the end of June.

Part of the Annual Plan discussion was an increase in fees and charges for some council services. One of the ways we have tried to minimise the rates increases this year is to move to a clearer user-pays approach for some of our council services. This is particularly true with our rubbish and recycling where increasing costs associated with dealing with our rubbish and recycling are more fairly paid by those who use the services the most.

That means there will be more consistency for those using our Resource Recovery Centres and clearer rules about the size of a 'load', what it can contain and how much it will cost. You can read more about these changes on the council website.

Get engaged!

Don't hesitate to get in touch if you want to get involved in this work or find out more.

We are currently talking to people and groups around the motu asking 'How can we be more engaging?' What do we do well and what could we do better when we communicate and engage with our communities? What things work and what things don't? What do you want to hear more about and what do you want to hear less about? There is no magic single solution, but we are on the journey!