

# town & country matters



June 2010 | Issue 58

## From the Mayor, Meng Foon



Tena koutou katoa, nga mihi whanui ki a koutou o Te Tai Rawhiti. This has been a very busy time for me and our councillors.

We have adopted the annual plan and soon you will

know how the increase in GST will be treated in the collection of rates.

I think of rates as an investment on behalf of our community. Imagine if we left the region looking like a dump? When Council uses your money to improve our region, your property increases in capital value over time and our place becomes more desirable to live, play and do business.

Gisborne missed out on \$7.2m for the industrial separation component of the wastewater project, but thanks to the community leaders who supported our funding quest.

The ECT is proposing changes to the trust deed. We hope common sense will prevail and that the community moves forward with a collaborative vision for the good of all.

The last of the government's \$90m Regional Development Roding funding, initiated by Jim Anderton, is being spent. This has been of great assistance to Tairawhiti.

With lots of development in the next few years, I can conservatively see 1000 new jobs. My advice is to get trained and be ready to participate.

I have been to many impressive functions involving our young people – Dancing in the Pa, Tairawhiti Youth Masquerade Ball at Ruatoria, youth acknowledgement awards in the city, the Cancer Society youth debate on hiding cigarettes from public view, and violence awareness at Te Wharau. We have a good future with our youth.

The Tairawhiti navigational traditions project is coming along. It is going to be the next WOW for Tairawhiti.

Ki nga mate kua wheturangitia, oku hoa, koutou whanaunga, ko Brian Crawshaw, young Leo Te Kira, haere, haere haere atu ra.

Nga mihi tau hou Matariki ki a koutou katoa, happy Maori New Year.



As a six-tonne panel is manoeuvred into position by crane, HEB Construction and Currie Construction workers help thread it over the starter bars that protrude from the footings. All the panels of the control room building have now been placed.

## Good progress on wastewater site

The \$39M upgrade of Gisborne city's wastewater system is well on the way. Good progress over the past six months has seen major construction at the Banks Street Wastewater Treatment Plant site, pipes laid in the Dunstan-McDonald's Road area for separating industrial sewage and a start made on the Awapuni industrial separation scheme.

At Banks Street, the bulk of the work has shifted from below-ground to become highly visible. Large pre-cast concrete walls have been erected for the control and pre-treatment buildings, giving real presence to the site. By the end of the month, 32 panels – 8.8m tall and weighing 8.5 tonnes – will begin to be placed in a colossal circle to form the

exterior wall of the 32.5m biological trickling filter tank.

Since January, the Banks Street site has been significantly strengthened through the addition of about 1300 stone columns. Three pump stations are being built on site. The largest – which holds treated wastewater before it is sent through the outfall – is a feat of engineering that has involved driving 18mm thick sheet metal piles 11m into the ground to form the sides, digging out 1000 cubic metres of soil to create a completed depth of 9.5m, and pouring a massive base and walls ranging from one to three metres thick.

Footings and foundation pipework for the base of the biological trickling filter tank are complete and about a third

of the structured plastic media that fit inside the tank has been welded. The project's main contractor HEB Structures will build the tank.

The two industrial separation schemes – involving five pump stations and about 10km of pipes – will see industrial effluent bypass the biological trickling filter plant.

The wastewater conveyance pipework has been laid from outside the on-site outfall pump station to Banks Street itself. These pipelines will be installed right down Banks Street to the existing Stanley Road treatment site.

The treatment plant is on track to begin operations during December. The city's domestic wastewater will be treated before being discharged to sea.

## Rates rise enables new and existing projects to take shape

An overall rates increase of 6.3 percent across the district for the coming year will see major projects continue and more get under way.

As well as completing the Gisborne Wastewater Project and the new dog pound now under construction, the Council will continue works to protect Ruatoria from flooding, plan for the development of the inner harbour and begin an upgrade of the War Memorial Theatre. Other new items include an arts and culture strategy and a township plan

for Hicks Bays including Potaka. Mayor Meng Foon says the rates rise required for the 2010/2011 Annual Plan, slightly less than forecast in the Ten Year Plan, represents good value for what will be delivered. Services would need to be reduced to achieve a further reduction in the rates rise. Gisborne city residential ratepayers will see rates increase by an average of 6.7 percent, most of it due to the wastewater project. Ruatoria's rates will decrease and those in most other rural areas will rise by up to 4.5 percent.

# Get council nominations in early for extra promotion

A technological advantage being offered free to candidates standing in this year's local body election could well see nominations received far earlier than usual.

Electoral officer Simon Jeune says Local Government Online's online web facility enables candidates to offer far more information than ever before. They can post videos, provide links to websites, blogs and twitters, identify key election issues, respond to voters' questions and even load an acceptance speech that will be made publicly available once the successful candidate is announced.

Local Elections 2010

**YOUR VOTE  
YOUR COMMUNITY**

They can also write far more words than the 150 to which they are restricted for profiles used in the candidate booklet issued with voting papers from 17 September, and posted on the council website.

There is one catch. The extended profile information won't be posted until the candidate has lodged their nomination. The earlier the nomination – 23 July 2010 at the earliest – the more time prospective candidates can gain exposure.

Mr Jeune says that at the last election, a third of the nominations were lodged in the final two hours,

causing unnecessary pressure for electoral staff. "We don't want to see that again. Ideally the sooner you put in your nomination, the sooner you can use the free Local Government Online website for promotion."

Nominations must be made between 23 July and 20 August, preferably at the start of the period. Candidates and voters for either the council or Tairāwhiti District Health need to be on the electoral roll. Candidate information is available on line at [www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz) or through Council offices.

For more information, contact electoral officer Simon Jeune or deputy Donna Shaw.

# Theatre upgrade gathers pace

The city's War Memorial Theatre may soon better live up to its name, providing improved spaces to remember and observe the district's servicemen and women.

Plans for the redesign and extension of the theatre moved centre stage last month after the adjoining RSA Club building and the Masonic Hall were offered to the Council. If these transfers go ahead, an open plaza space could be developed on the Childers Road side for dawn events and significant days. Space acquired from the RSA building would provide a joint foyer. Shared toilet facilities and a bar and restaurant would be developed in the RSA space.

Extra land is required to progress a proposed theatre redesign by specialist architect Roger Shand.



Community facilities asset manager Terry McMillan says the proposal would see the theatre's existing carpark space used for a new stage.

The 500-seat single auditorium would provide better

space for performers and the audience. The theatre currently accommodates 400 people.

"We need to finalise the layout and details, provide a cost estimate, ongoing costs and a business plan before we can go out to funders – all going well – by the end of September. We hope to start building early next year subject to funding."

Council would like to involve a lead artist to work with the architect.

"We want it to be a Gisborne theatre with art that reflects this community. This could be anything

from the carpet design to new artworks. Outside the RSA building, there could be patterns in the pavement to reflect something of the organisation's purpose."

# Community updates lead to action

It's the little things that can really count. Like fixing an incorrect spelling on a road sign, providing better information about Argentine ants, fixing the water supply to a township's public toilets or working out ways to make roads used by forestry safer for the community.

These and many more similar issues were among the massive 130 raised during 21 community update meetings held as part of the Draft Annual Plan consultation during March. Close to 30 "requests for service" on minor problems like eradicating rats in a public place were also raised. Many of these matters have already been addressed by Council staff.

Planning and performance team leader Harley Dibble is chuffed with the response and the increased number of people attending the meetings, up 30 percent from last year.

"The annual plan consultation process is important, not just for the formal submission process itself but also for the behind-the-scenes matters that are raised and actioned, the requests for service and the accountability over time. The communities hold us to account over what has and hasn't been done."

"The community updates have a lot of benefits. People get an understanding of what they get for their rates, and make requests to Council's work programme that don't have to be written in to the annual plan."

Another 160 issues, 38 of them in support of the Draft Annual Plan, were raised in the 69 formal submissions received. Of the 58 requests to take actions outside the Annual Plan, 45 were agreed to including pedestrian crossings in the city, installing new culverts under Mangatuna Road and sorting out parking in the Ballance Street Village.



Council's senior environmental health officer Judith Robertson (right) and Public Health Unit health protection officer Cyrena Bennett advise Ruth Ben about the dos and don'ts of unflued gas heaters, which produce air pollutants and can pose health risks.

# Unflued gas heaters need special care

Beating the winter chills? Council and Tairāwhiti District Health's health promotion staff will be hoping you are beating the chills safely.

Since early May, their representatives and those from energy efficiency organisation Energy Options have been battling the elements outside supermarkets and at Kaiti Mall to raise awareness about the potentially harmful effects of using unflued gas heaters. They also suggested alternative, cheaper heating modes.

To help get the message across, a prize draw of a \$3000 heating or insulation package was offered to

people filling out a survey on gas heater use. This offer finishes at the end of August.

Senior environmental health officer Judith Robertson says unflued gas heaters produce air pollutants. If these build up in a room, they pose a significant health risk to children, pregnant women, elderly people and those with asthma or heart disease. She advises people not to use unflued gas heaters in rooms where people sleep, or in caravans and tents.

If used, the heaters should only be used for short times and in well-ventilated rooms.

# In short

## Flush water before drinking

Residents are reminded of the Ministry of Health recommendation to flush a mugful of water from drinking-water taps (including those with filters) each morning before use to remove any metals that may have dissolved from plumbing fittings. This is recommended for all households, including those on public and private water supplies.

## Get in quick for rates rebate

If you haven't applied or re-applied for your rates rebate this year, you have until 30 June 2010 to do so. Remember to take in accurate details of your income to Council's city office or Te Puia Springs service centre. From 1 July, the maximum rates rebate will increase to \$570; the income abatement threshold to \$22,340.

## Motu cycle trail could be part of NZ network

It's a waiting game to see if Council's joint application for the old Motu coach trail to be part of the New Zealand Cycle Trail is successful. With the aid of a \$25,000 feasibility grant, Tourism Resource Consultants has reassessed the proposed routes and construction costs. The amended routes include one from Matawai to Opotiki via the old Motu Road to SH35 and between the sand dunes and the highway on the coastal stretch. An alternative route to Opotiki would use the Pakihi track (off the Motu track), Otara Road and then tracks along the stopbanks.

District policy team leader Kim Smith has put more than her heart and soul into the project. While investigating suitable tracks with the Wellington consultants, she carried her mountain bike for six hours because of the lack of formed tracks. All going well, she hopes to return to ride the tracks when they have been formed.

## Pool and holiday park to be rebranded

The Waikanae Beach Holiday Park has joined the Top 10 Holiday Parks franchise group, a nationwide network affiliated to the Big4 Holiday Parks of Australia. The Council's pool complex is expected to be rebranded following the collapse of the Gisborne-based Rockforte Finance last month. The testing station, now Gisborne Vehicle Testing, also has extended hours, new branding and livery and service to match.

## Containing run-off the key

Council staff continue their vigilance to ensure run-off from any subdivisions in the Wainui and Hamanatua streams' catchment areas is contained on site. Senior water conservator Paul Murphy says Council works to ensure there are no off-site effects with initial mitigation on site and further work once development takes place. Staff are also continuing discussions with Wainui residents to address concerns about increased peak flows resulting from subdivision developments and water quality issues in the Wainui Stream.

## Ruatoria cleaned up to the max

Road verges, cemeteries and other public spaces in coastal townships from Tokomaru Bay to Hicks Bay have been the welcome recipients of a spruce-up over the past six months, thanks to the Community Max project. Ruatoria-based workers also helped clear the site of a derelict shop in the main street, made repairs to a hut on Mt Hikurangi, and cleaned up the Waipiro Bay freedom camping site and the RSA plot at Ruatoria's cemetery. They are among seven teams of four workers and their supervisors who have been working around the district as part of the Community Max programme. The team gained work experience, formal training from Tairāwhiti Polytechnic and on-the-job skills, making make them more attractive to employers. A similar Te Araroa project finishes soon.

# Planning for second-to-none waterfront precinct

A waterfront precinct second-to-none may soon step off the planning books into limelight action. Council chief executive Lindsay McKenzie is hopeful that the various projects being planned from the inner harbour through to beyond Midway Beach can be brought together into one standout proposal. Talks are continuing with Eastland Community Trust and other parties to progress a unified concept. "In the next few months we hope to present a broad outline of what a consolidated set of projects could look like. Hopefully there will be a commitment from Council, the community trust and other parties to

achieve results. What is envisaged is not a planning exercise, it's about action." Walk and cycleways are integral to the concept that could include the inner harbour restaurant precinct, navigational traditions project, artificial hockey turf, Olympic pool and indoor sports centre. "We see this development as being uniquely Gisborne-Tairāwhiti, not a replica of Papamoa, for example." While the project is city-based, the value and enjoyment benefits are expected to reach throughout the district and into other districts.



Piles are driven in for the new bridge across the Wharekahika River. Photo: Bob Elliott

## New access across Wharekahika

East Coast hospitality and top-notch resources are hallmarks of a \$1M bridge project currently under way at the wharf end of Hicks Bay.

While a seafood-rich diet provided by a local caterer is keeping on-site workers satisfied, an 85 tonne crane – probably the largest seen on such projects around the district – is making sweet work of a job once done by manual labour.

To top it off, an engineer with decades of experience of bridge design, construction and supervision is keeping a strict eye on quality control. Bob Elliott – ex-Ministry of Works and Cook County engineer and former Gisborne District Council chief executive – has been employed by main contractor Holmes Consulting Group of Wellington to ensure the project complies with specifications. He is delighted to be using his engineering skills in the field again.

The new one-lane structure bridging Wharekahika River is being built downstream of the existing bridge by Concrete Structures Ltd to significantly improve access to half a dozen homes, Matakaoa

Station and the historic Hicks Bay wharf. The existing bridge prevents use by heavy vehicles over 10 tonnes, including the Fire Service appliance.

Eight cylindrical piles are being driven in to a depth of up to 10 metres to provide a solid foundation for 12 beams, measuring 20 metres and weighing 25 tonne, which will form the bridge platform. Much of the componentry is pre-cast.

Council roading area engineer Dennis Malone thanked adjoining landowners for their cooperation in making progress on the project easier.

"This new bridge is the first to be built on Council roads for years and makes access to Matakaoa and Hicks Bay wharf a whole lot easier."

The bridge is expected to be completed within the next few months, depending on the weather and just how long the crayfish, whitebait, paua and other delicacies keep coming. When the bridge is finished, the locals will also see the spelling error in the bridge sign corrected. The Wharekahia Bridge sign will then read Wharekahika.

## Sharing road keeps everyone happy

New signage and road markings at busy roundabouts on Gladstone and Ormond roads is reminding motorists and cyclists to share the road.

Road safety coordinator Lenora McDonald has already received positive responses to the new signs which, with the help of NZTA funding, have been erected at top priority locations. She says learning

how to successfully negotiate a roundabout is a vital part of making cycling a safe and enjoyable experience, and reducing accidents.

"Cyclists have equal rights to use the road but, like motorists, they need to abide by the road rules and show their intentions clearly.

"To ensure they are clearly visible to motorists, cyclists should use the centre of the roundabout circulating lane, not the inner or outer edge."



Advertisements running in The Gisborne Herald show this in diagram form.

While the **Share the Road** signs are dominant because they are new, the idea is to move them to other priority

locations before driver complacency sets in. The project has come out of ongoing work between the Cycling Advisory Group and Council staff to find solutions to cycling hazards. The group meets at midday on the third Wednesday each month in the Council Chambers. All are welcome.

## More talks on increasing flood protection of Waipaoa scheme

The options are numerous. Should the Waipaoa River Flood Control Scheme be upgraded to provide protection against a 100-year, 150-year or maybe 200-year flood? The cost of these could range from \$12M to \$30M? Or would it be better to decide what is affordable annually and see what can be done for a sum of, say, \$1M of rates a year? This would increase the level of protection but take longer to build. The advantage is that there would then be no bank loan required and no interest accumulating. How should the cost be divided up? Is 20 percent

enough of a share to be paid by the people who benefit indirectly from the scheme? Because without the scheme, Gisborne would not have the magnificent range of crops on the plains that it does nor would there be the economic benefits associated with horticulture and viticulture. These are some of the questions being bandied around at public meetings as part of a pre-consultation discussion on the future of the scheme. A do-nothing option will also be considered. The existing scheme offers protection against a storm

with a 70-year return period, similar to the size of Cyclone Bola. Engineering and works manager Peter Higgs says the feedback from public meetings over the past few months will enable a proposed option to be put forward for consultation. Background reports and presentations on the scheme are available on the Council's website, [www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz). The proposal for comment is expected to go out to the public in August with the idea of incorporating any proposed upgrade in the next Ten Year Plan consultation round.



Genealogists, Council staff and Community Max workers all helped with the upgrade of the online cemetery database. From left are Isobel Coulston, Dot McCulloch, Sam Crawshaw, Amy Richardson, Trieve Rolls, Taruheru sexton Alex McAneney with (front L-R) William Cotton and Daniel Swan, who with Robert Dolman were responsible for photographing all the headstones and plaques in the cemetery.

## Cemetery database improved

Genealogists, researchers and ordinary people who just want to know when their Uncle Freddie died and where at Taruheru Cemetery he is buried will soon have more information at their fingertips.

Within the next month or so, not only will all 23,000 burials at the Taruheru Cemetery be included in the Council's electronic database but they will also be accompanied by photographs and inscriptions of headstones or plaques and, where available, extra information about the buried person themselves – for instance, age, maiden name and whether there is a plaque but no ashes. Each burial is also linked to the appropriate block, plot number and unique warrant number.

The project began as a relatively simple task to update Council's online cemetery database after a transfer of information from one computer system to another left 5000 burials behind.

Electronic information provided by the Genealogical Society enabled the 5000 to be included again. Project coordinator Amy Richardson says the upgrade of the missing burials has taken five months, not the one month originally expected.

"It started off as a project to find the missing records but morphed into headstones with a Community Max programme team photographing all headstones in

the Taruheru cemetery and readying the images for the database."

The project has proved particularly pleasing for property administration officer Sam Crawshaw, who is the recipient of numerous inquiries a year mainly from New Zealand but also Australia and the UK.

"We knew we wanted to have the headstones photographed and Community Max enabled this to happen. This has been really good for us. Everyone is trying to get it right."

The cemetery database is the fifth most popular page on Council's website. Council holds cremation records up until March 1998 and, if ashes were buried, all burial records. Evans Funeral Services holds cremation records from April 1998.

### Website hailed

Council's website has been ranked 6th out of 85 council websites for its quality of information and services available. The rise from 30th last year reflects its complete redevelopment with added extras including data on river levels and rainfall. The four websites ranked above Council's were from large metropolitan councils with far larger development budgets.

## Closed door issues out in the open

This is the type of discussion that happens out of the public eye. Senior staff supporting Council's vision for the region – to be the first choice for lifestyle and people, enterprise and environment.

It's the big picture stuff, the big questions facing the district. And it's ever so slightly high-brow.

It's about identifying strategic challenges and comes in response to several factors including the need for a clear sense of purpose, and changes to the Local Government Act which will see Council-led outcomes replace "community outcomes".

Chief executive Lindsay McKenzie says it's also best practice. Until this work began, Council had not identified challenges facing the community and Council in a structured way.

"Under the four headings – our customers, our people [staff and councillors], our processes [how Council does business] and sustainability – we identified 10 strategic challenges facing the district, 10 related outcomes we want to achieve and things we need to do to get better. These are underpinned by our values that include giving service, focusing on solutions, innovation, working together and having a can-do attitude.

"This is not business as usual. These are issues outside day-to-day Council operations that we need to be better at or we need to change."

Mr McKenzie says it's not just words on paper. The model requires action, measurement – including measuring performance at an individual and team level – reporting systems and improvement.

Take this example. One of the challenges facing Council and the community is the need to live within its means in the face of economic conditions, government policy changes, affordability and limits on rates revenue.

"The outcome we seek is for current and future Council commitments to be funded in a way the community can afford and that meets Council's stewardship obligations to the district.

"How do we get there? We develop relationships and policies that make investment in the district attractive, build a financial sustainability model and maintain local choice in investment and spending decisions. While there is still a lot of work and talk to do at a practical level, I am impressed with the extent to which this strategic challenge work is already assisting staff and councillors to make choices."

## Developing an overarching strategy for arts, culture and heritage

A unified vision for how art, culture and heritage are represented in the district is expected to have a significant impact on Council's future planning and decision-making.

Strategy adviser Pania Ruakere says an arts and culture strategy currently being developed will help ensure decisions about where and how art, culture and heritage are represented are part of an overarching plan. She says concerns have been raised in the past – as voiced in submissions to successive

annual and ten-year plan documents – about art appearing in public places seemingly at random.

"This new strategy will be a guide, providing the background so that any decisions will be in line with a wider vision for the district. From an organisational point of view, this will drive policies, procedures and guidelines. In time, we expect to be able to assess proposals for art in public places against guidelines developed as part of the strategy."

She says district planning and urban design can

reflect the unique culture of the region and heritage of the people, and create a backdrop to a thriving arts community.

Council supports and promotes arts, culture and heritage in its role as funder and steward of Tairāwhiti Museum, theatres and Art in Public Places.

Helping to develop the strategy are an advisory group comprising staff, councillors Allan Hall and Andy Cranston and community arts representatives, and an internal working party.