

town & country matters



March 2011 | Issue 61

From the Mayor, Meng Foon



Tena koutou katoa, ki nga whanau o Te Tairāwhiti.

Hello all. This month is going to be busier than ever for all of us as we have a number of community engagement meetings throughout our

region from Hicks Bay to Matawai, Tiniroto and Manutuke.

At the meetings, we're going to report to you about what we've done, about the issues you raised, since our last meeting. We will focus on your area's work programme, get some feedback from you and then give you an overview of the region's major projects.

Our committees have settled in well. Our new councillors have taken up the challenge to learn more and have made good contributions to meetings.

Our finance team is looking at every area of operations and projects as we need to get the rates down. So far we are at a rates rise across the district of 3.52 percent.

The challenges of increasing fuel prices and electricity will increase the cost of operations because everything that the Council uses for the benefit of our community involves power and fuel.

We've had some very successful events, Te Matatini being the standout. Congratulations to all involved, and especially the hundreds of volunteers who gave their aroha to support this most memorable event. *Kei te mihi ora atu ki a koutou katoa. Ka mau te wehi.*

The Tairāwhiti Navigations Project is coming together slowly. We are thinking of using the railway bridge as the crossover to the river dividing wall, and making a small platform for the kids to dive into the river on the railway bridge as well.

Two major sculptures have been unveiled – the Evolution from Beijing and the Voyager at the Railway Reserve by the Waikanae Stream. Thanks to all the sponsors.

We have a number of businesses locating to Gisborne and relocating around it. The land sectors are steady in their work which has sustained the region through some difficult times.

I would like to acknowledge the passing of former councillor Muriel Jones who made a huge contribution to the Cook County Council and Gisborne District Council.

I wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous Chinese Rabbit Year. Our doors are always open.

Kia ora, Meng

Will this be our next big project?

See story bottom of page 2



Tairāwhiti Navigations Project

concept drawings by Soul Environments

The project involves designing and building innovative infrastructure in and around the harbour, based on the region's unique cultural history; establishing coastal walkways, reusing the rail line for recreation and leisure, pedestrian access along the seawall to Butler's Wall, and planting.

Wastewater plant fully operational

The plume of screened, untreated wastewater that has from time to time discoloured the waters of the bay may have met its match. The plume has not been visible since the city's new wastewater treatment plant was fully commissioned on 28 December, just days ahead of the 31 December deadline. The quality of the treated wastewater discharge has already improved hugely on what was pumped out from the old Stanley Road milliscreening plant. Early tests show that the reduction in contamination

indicators – such as enterococci, total oil and grease, and biological oxygen demand – is better than thought possible at the design stage.

After years of discussion, debate and design, the new Banks Street treatment plant is fully in action.

Main contractor HEB Structures built the plant and the associated industrial separation scheme within 13 months to complete the project on time and under budget. In so doing, HEB pumped \$5.3m from its own \$21m contract directly into the local economy, and

that's not counting what its workers and subcontractors spent on food and accommodation while living in the city for the duration of the project. The HEB crew has since moved on to new jobs, as has the crane that dominated the city skyline for more than a year.

The \$39.5m Gisborne Wastewater Project is the biggest capital project ever undertaken by Gisborne District Council and the biggest since the wastewater submarine outfall was built in 1965 for Gisborne City Council.

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Operators Gary Baxter of Fulton Hogan (left) and Dave Viggars of Gisborne District Council are now steering the new treatment plant in Banks Street.



Voyagers – both of them. Community facilities asset manager Terry McMillan was pleased to see Kon Dimopoulos's Voyager sculpture finally berth beside the Waikanae Stream.

Voyagers eye new horizons

The installation of the new Voyager sculpture is a fitting finale to Terry McMillan's 12 years as community facilities asset manager. As the Kon Dimopoulos's red kinetic sculpture journeys into new horizons of sound, sight and light, Terry will be voyaging around the Caribbean aboard his new 37 foot catamaran.

Terry left in late February not because he was tired of the job's demands and not because the role didn't hold enough interest for him. He left because there was more he wanted to do in life.

He and his wife Julie are no strangers to sailing. Years ago, they built a 38 foot monohull and sailed around Europe and then, on a catamaran with children in tow, sailed the Med.

The Australian civil engineer lived and worked around the world before arriving in Gisborne to jobs with Opus then Eastworks. He took on the Council role in 1998 and was quickly thrust into one of his major achievements – consolidating all council departments on the one extended building site in Fitzherbert Street. The reshuffle put a few noses out of joint as not all staff got their desired views but generally staff cooperated well.

"Within three months we sold two Council buildings which gave us \$2m, enough to go ahead with extending the Fitzherbert Street building. "It has been good for Council to be on the one site. There's much better communication, the silos (separate groups) have gone and the vehicle fleet was reduced.

"Council continues to improve as an organisation. We work more as a team on many projects from riparian plantings and dune care, with conservation and planning staff, and Township Management Plans, with roading and utilities." He cites various projects as achievements of his time including the riverbank walkway extension and a stack of skate parks developed throughout the district.

"Teenagers tend to be the forgotten ones. We have sports parks for adults and playgrounds with swings for the young ones but there has always been a gap. Skate parks have helped fill that. They give young people a place where they feel comfortable to meet, socialise and be active." He places great importance on "the little things", such as helping a community get lights, a veg patch or trees.

"They are not of great significance on their own but it has been good helping to make a difference, giving people something they have always wanted."

He's become a master of making incremental but significant changes on impossibly tight budgets and gained a certain pleasure from seeing 20 new and upgraded toilets – hardly a sexy project – installed in 10 years.

Thrilled to see Voyager erected before his departure, he was disappointed that the withdrawal of government funding left the Waikanae walk and cycleway unfinished. Maybe it will be when he returns one day.

Pultron rods grace skyline as sculpture finally installed

The new Voyager sculpture now installed beside the Waikanae Stream in Grey Street heralds a new departure for Melbourne-based artist Kon Dimopoulos. For the first time, he has his high-performance fibreglass rods – made by Gisborne's Pultron Composites and painted red – framed by a planked waka rather than emerging directly from the ground.

His sculptures have become much-loved in the capital with their myriad of graceful movements, and chattering of swaying rods. It's common for people to

pause, watch and listen. Voyager is expected to be a drawcard by day and, with lighting below, by night. Council worked with the community as part of Art in Public Places to see the project finally take shape. Many local businesses donated to the project. Council contributed about \$25,000.

Pultron Industries donated about \$30,000 worth of materials for the project, originally mooted in 2003. The sculpture comprises flat bars as planking and 200 fibreglass rods of varying diameters and height, the tallest being 8m. Originally, Voyager was to occupy

a position in the middle of the stream. Its new riverbank position required a lease to occupy from DoC and a variation to a previous resource consent. Dimopoulos describes Voyager as a kinetic sculpture, a visual narrative that describes an unfolding and enduring journey to self-discovery.

Pultron has been working in an Art with Industry partnership with Dimopoulos since 2000. The Pacific Grass sculpture near Wellington airport is one of many of his works using Pultron materials installed in New Zealand and overseas.

Plantings will reflect history of area

Entranceways, plantings, walkways, sculptures and interpretation are features of what could be the city's next major project – the Tairāwhiti Navigations Project. Consultants are progressing design concepts and costings with the aim of applying for funding later this year. The cost of the project will be mainly externally funded. A completed business case highlights the potential social and economic benefits. The project is expected to support economic development through connected enterprises, recreational facilities and historic interpretation developments.

Joint project manager Peter Higgs says Tairāwhiti Museum would still be the hub for the project but the earlier proposal to build a bridge from the slipway over the Tūrangānuī River to near the Captain Cook statue has been replaced.

"The idea now is to build a clip-on to the railway bridge already in place, and provide a platform from which young people, generally, can jump into the river. Consultants – CPG and Soul Environments – have proposed a significant entry space with plantings at the

start of the existing wall dividing the river and port, and a boardwalk along to the first meeting point between Māori and European cultures. The plantings suggested would re-introduce the natural species that once grew at the foot of Titirangi, before the port was constructed.

"Other ideas include developing a walkway from the museum under the Peel Street Bridge towards the William Pettie Bridge, and creating a less formal, natural edge to the Taruheru riverbank with plantings and areas of interest. Crossing the port road above The Works could take the form of an underpass, level crossing or bridge. Remaining walkways along the Turanganui, Taruheru and Waimata rivers will be completed as part of the project."

Proposals for Wairoa's Rangihoua Pa and Pilot's Hill involve improving existing carparking, developing the walkway to the pa site to include planting of the local species *Hebe Tairāwhiti*, recreating kumara gardens, interpretation and seating. NZ Trade & Enterprise, ECT and Eastland Port provided feasibility funding, and Council is managing the project.

Discharge of higher quality

From page 1:

So how has the quality of the discharge improved? Firstly, the wastewater from the city and septic tanks in outlying areas is screened through 1mm mesh screens vastly superior to the old Stanley Road screens.

Secondly, about 400kg of grit is being removed from the wastewater every fortnight. In the past this would have been discharged into the bay where it would settle at the end of the diffuser pipe. Grit gets into the wastewater from within the ageing pipe network. Thirdly, the screened and dewatered wastewater goes through a process known as biotransformation which converts the fine solids of wastewater remaining into plant-like matter.

The resulting discharge, if left in a bucket of water, settles into quite clear water and a fluffy component at the bottom.

The plant, officially opened on 22 March, is now operated by Gisborne District Council technician Dave Viggars and Fulton Hogan.

In short

Are you prepared for our next big quake?

Christchurch's devastating earthquake should be a wake-up call for everyone in the Gisborne district too. To learn about what to do before, during and after an earthquake, go to www.gdc.govt.nz/earthquake-advice or ring Council's customer services.

The Civil Defence section of Council's website also links to the national Get Ready Get Thru site.

Upgrade aerials for digital TV in 2012

Next year, analogue television in our district will be replaced by digital television with the promise of clearer pictures, sharper sound and more television channels. Now the question on everyone's lips is do we need to buy a new telly? The answer is no. But what you may need to do is upgrade your aerial. For further information, phone 0800 838 800 or see www.goingdigital.co.nz

Muriel championed Wainui cycleway

Former councillor Muriel Jones was a great advocate for safe cycle and walkways. She became Cook County Council's first woman councillor in 1977, serving three terms, and as a district councillor served for two terms from local body amalgamation in 1989 until 1995. She paved the way for women who followed but her great disappointment was that the Wainui cycle and walkway did not come to fruition before her death in February.

Upping fitness at Tokomaru Bay

Tokomaru Bay people now have the chance to be that much fitter within their natural surroundings thanks to eight new fitness stations.

Property services manager Terry McMillan says low-cost, wooden fitness stations were installed along the beachfront after the community saw a need for such a trail to help support health. Four were installed on the skate park end, four on the school side at a cost of \$3000.

The work stations cover a number of fitness areas including strength, stamina, balance and core. Community development officer Ngarimu Simpkins took the first plunge after the official opening in mid-December to show how to use the fitness trail. He was quickly followed by children from Hatea-a-rangi Primary School and Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o nga Taonga Tuturu.

Ngarimu says the work stations will provide positive physical activity while encouraging self pride and enriching the community.

Arts strategy brings planned approach

Art is popping up all over in public places. But with Council's proposed Arts and Culture Strategy, residents can be assured that proper criteria for the selection, commissioning and placement of physical artwork in the city will be followed.

Besides the new Voyager sculpture in Grey Street, others are close to being unveiled or considered for erection.

A stone artwork created by Graeme Gedye for the Te Wai-o-Hiharore Urupa Reserve in Pitt Street was expected to be finally unveiled this month. Patterns similar to those on a Titirangi lookout have been incorporated into the footpath to help link the two sites.

Artists have been registering their interest in creating an artwork for beside the Waikanae Stream to recognise the hapu and iwi from this area. The piece itself is to balance the Captain Cook statue on the opposite bank and fit in with the aims of the Tairāwhiti Navigations Project. The project has a \$70,000 budget.

Artist Murray Ball has given approval for Council to go ahead with commissioning a bronze casting of his Footrot Flats' characters Wal and Dog. The sculpture could cost up to \$100,000 for which funding would be sought outside Council.

Community planning and development group manager Nedine Thatcher Swann says the arts and culture strategy is good news.

"It means that when a public art piece is installed, it will have been planned for and will fit with what the community wants to see. People tell us they want to see more of our cultural diversity, tangata whenua artwork and more interpretations to sit alongside art so that you know where it has come from and why it is there."

You still have a chance to provide your input into Council's draft Arts and Culture Strategy which is available on the website for comment until the end of March.

Working to hold down rates

Growing Council's own businesses and encouraging economic development will all help reduce the rates burden, says new corporate services group manager Mike Drummond.

Councillors and staff have already reduced the proposed 8.1 percent rates rise for the 2011/12 year to 3.5 percent. This was achieved through cost savings, favourable contract prices, prudent use of reserve funds and rating for an average rather than worst-case year.

"If we can maintain the existing level of service while maintaining the costs, we can hold rates down."

With the wastewater project completed, Council is now in consolidation phase. Major projects ahead generally have high external funding components.

"Rates affordability is a major consideration.

It's not that Gisborne's rates are particularly high compared to similar local authorities but the income levels within the community are at the lower end. No matter how good we are, people will still struggle. We have \$1.75 billion in fixed assets and a \$39 million debt after building a \$35 million wastewater plant. That debt is relatively low compared to similar-sized councils.

"Economic development for the region needs to be pushing to help people increase their income levels so they are in a better position to pay, and to get more people into the area to help spread the costs over a larger group of ratepayers."

He sees Council as having a facilitative role in a business-led Economic Development Agency. Part of his role is to grow Council's businesses – the holiday park, testing station, forestry and commercial properties. "The larger the contribution they make, the less I have to get from rates."

After several years as Council's chief financial officer and a background in the private business

sector, Mr Drummond brings a strong commercial focus to the role. Better financial reporting – with monthly instead of quarterly reports – has been introduced to help councillors make better decisions. Blending financial and non-financial reports will give everyone a clear indication of how well Council is doing. "If councillors and staff know what is happening sooner, they can respond sooner."



Corporate services group manager Mike Drummond.

To help improve returns, business plans have been developed for the holiday park and testing station and within the next six months plans will be developed for forestry and commercial properties. Council is gearing up to take advantage of the Emissions Trading Scheme and expects significant income from its forestry joint venture in 2020.

He says the Banks St wastewater treatment site is a good example

of improving returns on a commercial site. Within a tight budget, Council's archives, and rivers and drainage operations were relocated to an existing building, parts of which were leased to two businesses including VTNZ. This had the added benefit of getting heavy vehicles off Childers Rd.

He's enjoying his new responsibilities outside a strictly finance role and the ability to make more of a difference.

"It's at least as challenging as the private sector. We are the equivalent of a big corporate and need to manage finances and operations in the same professional way while adding the extra dimension of supporting community wellbeings.

"The challenge is in providing enough facilities to attract people to grow the district while keeping it affordable to the ratepayer."



Manutuke (left) and Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o Waipiro school students help develop township plans for their communities.

Townships planning for their future

Communities around the district have been working hard with Council on plans for their future.

Plans for Manutuke, and the combined Motu/Matawai communities have been signed off and two more – for Waipiro Bay/Te Puia Springs, and Tikitiki/Rangitukia – were to be finalised this month. Although each community is distinct with its own priorities, some were willing to work together to create a plan.

Natural resources policy team leader Yvette Kinsella said the Motu Cycle Trail had added an extra dimension for Motu/Matawai. The community had a clear vision of where to invest their time and energy. A Motu rest area has been developed and road safety issues on the highway at Matawai have been resolved. Work has begun on improving the health of the Motu River with riparian plantings by local landowners and river monitoring by the Motu School.

At Manutuke, where water – too much or not enough – is a major issue, Council engineering staff have been liaising with landowners, studying drainage in the area and assessing water supply options.

Senior planner Keriana Wilcox says often it is the simple things that make living in smaller rural communities easier. For instance the Waipiro Bay community asked for, and gained, a large skip bin for rubbish during the freedom camping season in preference to what was seen as a littering of blue plastic rubbish bags along their beach.

The community wants to upgrade the boat ramp, research kaimoana reserves and install shark nets around the rocks to promote scuba diving as a tourism activity. The Te Puia Springs community wants to clean up around Lake Ratahi and create a heritage trail through to the DoC reserve beside the hotel. Tikitiki people were keen to have input into the welcome signage on SH35 and were looking forward to the upgrade planned for the town's playground, once the land lease is signed off.

"They want to beautify the road in and out of Tikitiki with shrubs and trees, and lighting to reflect up to St Mary's Church and on to the playground. Tikitiki and Rangitukia want to see a Waiapu Flood Management Plan focused on both sides of the river."

Closer to developing a cohesive Waikanae precinct

A bid to make the Waikanae precinct first class for leisure and cultural activities is progressing nicely. Council chief executive Lindsay McKenzie says Eastland Community Trust has agreed to put \$50,000 into a pre-feasibility study. This will look at existing facilities and focus on practical aspects of redeveloping them and adding new facilities into the precinct. A concept plan will outline the steps needed to ultimately build key community

infrastructure that has been on the drawing board for some time. The precinct could include a variety of sports facilities and walk and cycleways as well as support residential and commercial investment and the Tairāwhiti Navigations Project.

The aim is to enable a cluster of projects to occur in the Waikanae precinct, between the port and Pacific Street, and to fit together in a way that enhances their worth and maximises economic benefit.

“It’s a way of working together with groups and key funders, especially Eastland Community Trust, to ensure community facilities intended for the area are sensibly planned,” Mr McKenzie says. “We want to make the precinct first class for leisure and cultural activities, and the catalyst for redeveloping nearby residential and industrial lands.”

Global Leisure Group will develop a feasibility plan by mid-May and an implementation plan by September.

Still time to make submission on draft Annual Plan

You have just days now to make a submission on the draft Annual Plan for 2011/12. Submissions need to be with Council by 4pm, 31 March 2011.

Community meetings have been held around the district since early March and over the next two weeks more will be held from Tikitiki to Matawai. These are a great chance for you to talk to staff and councillors in person, and to hear about projects planned for the year. Or you just might prefer to make a submission – you can do both. Remember, Council wants to hear what you think are the good things it’s been doing as well as what you think it could do better.

The ‘business as usual’ Annual Plan – year 3 of the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan – provides core services and activities that contribute to making our district a great place to live. Most of the projects planned have been talked about for a while. They’re all about improving community facilities, protecting the environment, working with communities, and protecting people and keeping them connected.

What do you think about the plans to redevelop the **War Memorial Theatre** into a modern, 500-seat facility better suited to today’s needs? The proposed upgrade will see the theatre’s layout turned 90 degrees and a new stage built in what is the car park. Council will pay \$927,000 with the rest being sought from other funders.

Do you agree with the idea of Council part-funding an independent **Economic Development Agency**?

Do we need such an agency? Council invests

funding into its Economic Development Unit, Tourism Eastland, the Heart of Gisborne and the Tairāwhiti Development Partnership. Many councils have combined these entities under one umbrella. While structures vary, all are funded in some way by councils.

Who do you think should pay for upgrading the level of protection for the **Waipaoa River Flood Control Scheme**? Do you realise how vital the scheme has been to Gisborne’s economy since 1950? Council will consult with the community to help decide who will pay for the estimated \$6m cost and what their share will be.

Developers are not the only people likely to have an opinion on Council’s proposal to amend its **Development Contributions Policy**. This amendment will see an increase in the contribution required from people and companies developing new residential, commercial or industrial sites or buildings.

Development contributions are used to fund roading, water supply, wastewater and stormwater disposal and reserves and open spaces – all of which are affected by growth. The proposed amendment will enable Council to seek \$901,000 of new roading, water supply, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure in the Western Industrial, Aerodrome Road area.

You may even want to comment on **which flags** should be flown on Council buildings on Waitangi Day and other days during the year.

Meanwhile, Council plans a raft of improved and maintained services. Further work on **parks and**

reserves includes better drainage for Anzac Park’s sports turf, and new grass on Watson Park and Tolaga Bay fields. New public toilets are planned for Hicks Bay, Te Karaka, Waikanae Beach and Nelson Park.

The **district’s 1900km of roads** will be improved to make them safer and ensure better access. Projects on the agenda include upgrading Tauwharepara, Mata and Tarewa roads.

Civil Defence will work on educating people about potential hazards that may affect the community. They want people to prepare themselves now, not to wait until disaster strikes.

Changes to bus routes and a revised timetable could be in store as Council works to improve the service for commuters using the **passenger bus service**. What do you think of the service? [see survey below]

Check out the full draft Annual Plan at Council’s offices or go to www.gdc.govt.nz

Send your submission to Freepost, Have Your Say, Annual Plan, Gisborne District Council, PO Box 747, Gisborne 4040 OR hand it in at the Customer Service desk Fitzherbert Street, Gisborne OR ask Customer Service staff to fill out the form for you over the phone.

Still time to attend community meeting

- 21 March: Whangara Marae, 5pm
Tolaga Bay Fire Station, 7.30pm
- 22 March: Makauri School Library, 5.30pm
Waikirikiri School, 6.30pm
- 23 March: Waiapu RSA, Tikitiki, 3.30pm
Uepohatu Marae, Ruatoria, 6pm
- 24 March: Matawai Fire Brigade Rooms, 6pm
- 28 March: Waerenga-o-Kuri Hall, 5.30pm
- 29 March: HB Williams Memorial Library, 6pm



PUBLIC PASSENGER TRANSPORT SURVEY 2011

Gisborne’s public commuter bus service provides an alternative to taking your own vehicle to town and saves you the worry of having to find a car park. Council would like feedback from the people who use OR do not use this service, to help make improvements.

Do you use the Gisborne Commuter Bus Service? NO/YES (please circle one) If NO, why is that?

Ratings	1= excellent	2= very good	3 = good	4= poor	5= very poor	6= dreadful
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Please use these ratings to answer the questions below

	Rating	Comments
How do you rate the service?		
How do you rate its value for money?		
Is the service available when you need it?		
Is the journey time reasonable?		
Is the service frequent enough?		
Does your service arrive/depart on time?		
How do you rate safety and personal security ... during the trip?		
... at the bus stop?		
How do you rate vehicle quality/comfort?		

What is the main reason for choosing to use the public transport service? (circle one)

parking costs or availability	to be socially responsible	I like it	quicker	value for money	no alternative
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PLEASE CUT THIS OUT AND POST TO TRANSPORT SURVEY, GISBORNE DISTRICT COUNCIL PO BOX 747, GISBORNE

Still cycling along

Cycle and walkways continue to be on the agenda, says engineering and works group manager Peter Higgs, despite a lack of government funds to work with.

“We will continue to press for funding opportunities for alternative modes of transport such as cycleways.

“In the meantime, we are working with the Cycling Advisory Group, which is helping with the promotion of cycling safety, improvements at roundabouts and signage.

“A review of Council’s walking and cycling strategy is also being considered. Last month, the Cycling Advisory Group urged Council to reduce car parking in the city to help encourage people to use non-motorised forms of transport, and to help make the city centre safer for cyclists and pedestrians.”

Work on the \$2.12M Motu Trails cycleway is under way with the Pakihi Track section expected to be rideable before next summer.

District policy team leader Kim Smith says work has also started on the Opotiki stopbanks section, and resource consents have been prepared for the Opotiki dune route. Signage and information boards are planned for the Gisborne side of the trail. All going well, the whole trail could be open before next summer.

Last month Council agreed by just one vote to put \$10,000 into the Motu Trails Charitable Trust as seed funding to help establish initial operations.