

# town & country matters



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From the Chief Executive  
Lindsay McKenzie

*Tena koutou katoa*



Greetings and welcome to the last Town & Country Matters for this term of Council. The Mayor and councillors are not contributors

to this newsletter because of the close proximity of the elections and the requirement that candidates for election to the Mayoralty or Council do not communicate using Council's resources. I'm sure you will find the stories and brief updates on what the Council has been doing interesting nevertheless.

Election time is challenging for all. Candidates – current elected members or people seeking election for the first time – are under all sorts of pressure. The staff too are under extra pressure to perform, not only by dealing with day-to-day issues but also those that arise around election time.

The accountability regime in the Local Government Act can also be a cause of frustration. It is not possible to campaign these days on the promise to do 'this or that' especially if 'this or that' requires a material change in budgets and priorities. It doesn't matter if the promise is to do more or less of something; the result is much the same. The budgets, work programmes and priorities are fairly well set until 1 July 2011 and, in some cases, through until 1 July 2012. They can be changed of course but the cost of doing so and the complex decision-making process is a disincentive.

That's not as bad as it may seem. The rest of staff and I are committed to serving the Council and the community to the best of our ability. As you'll see from a couple of the stories that follow, there has been a step-up in the quality of that service in recent times. I'm always keen to hear about the times when we have let you and ourselves down so that we can learn and improve. I'm even more keen to hear when things have gone well.

*Ka mau te wehi!*

## Time to decide who will represent your ward

Thirty-one people have put up their hands to represent their communities on Gisborne District Council for the next three years. And soon it will be your chance to place your tick. All Gisborne residents and ratepayers can vote for a mayor and councillors from 17 September, when voting papers begin to be sent out, until midday on Election Day 9 October. Electors away from home for the entire three-week voting period should ask neighbours or friends to post their voting documents to them. Alternatively, they can register with the electoral officer as a special voter, and voting documents will be sent to them out of town. See [www.gdc.govt.nz/elections](http://www.gdc.govt.nz/elections).

People living or paying rates in the Matakaoa, Patutahi-Taruheru, and Waikohu wards get to vote for just one councillor. People in the Gisborne ward can vote for eight candidates.

Graeme Thomson and Pat Seymour were both unopposed in

Local Elections 2010

**YOUR VOTE  
YOUR COMMUNITY**

their wards of Cook and Uawa, and will take their place on Council when it is sworn in. Remaining candidates are –

**Mayoralty:** Meng Foon, Gary Hope

**Matakaoa:** Murray Henare, Kerry Kururangi, Patrick Tangaere

**Waipapu:** Bill Burdett, Ngarangi Walker, Marijke Warmenhoven

**Waikohu:** Pene (Ben) Brown, Owen Lloyd, Pamela Murphy

**Patutahi-Taruheru:** Roger Haisman, Steve Scragg

**Gisborne:** Nona Aston, Craig Bauld, Manu Caddie, Andy Cranston, Alan Davidson, Larry Foster, Allan Hall, Tina Karaitiana, Anne Pardoe, Atareta Poananga, Clare Radoyske, Fiona Ratapu-Rodden, Murray Robertson, Darrington Slater, Rehette Stoltz, Brian Wilson. See also page 3.

## Wastewater treatment moving on up

It's only a matter of months now until the quality of wastewater discharged into the bay is substantially improved.

From early January 2011, the city's wastewater will be screened through very fine stainless steel mesh and the remaining fine solids transformed into plant-like matter in the biological trickling filter (BTF) tank before being pumped 1.8km through the existing outfall into the ocean. Currently, the city's domestic wastewater is only screened.

Work began on the city's new wastewater treatment plant in Banks Street early this year and, despite the loss of eight working days to wet weather, the project remains on time and within budget. The three main structures – the biological trickling filter tank, control room and pre-treatment building – are nearly complete and expected to be ready for mechanical and electrical installation this month. The last of the massive concrete panels forming the external wall of the 32m-diameter BTF tank were erected during August, the gaps between them concreted and the whole structure tied together by tensioning steel cables in ducts within the wall panels. The tank will be covered with an aluminium



Operations committee members inspect the Banks Street biological trickling filter tank before it was closed in.

dome roof, the apex of which is 15m above ground level.

Project manager Peter McConnell says an air extractor system is in place under the tank's raised concrete grid floor. This draws out odour from the bottom of the tank and pushes it into specially designed bark odour beds.

This month, a start was made on installing 11,000 haybale-like black plastic media blocks on top of the grid floor. When complete, the 10 layers of blocks – each layer being placed at right angles to the previous – will stand 6.1m high inside the tank.

Screened wastewater will be pumped up through the tank's central column

to a height of 8m from where it will be distributed via six rotating arms to trickle slowly through the plastic media as part of the transformation process. The treated wastewater will be collected at the bottom of the BTF and combined with milliscreened industrial effluent in the new outfall pumping station, then pumped through to connect into the existing outfall.

Mr McConnell says construction at Banks Street has been matched by good progress on the two industrial separation schemes, which will see industrial effluent bypass the BTF. The project is providing work for a number of city subcontractors.

## Another hill to cross on way to popular Anaura Bay campsite

The Anaura Bay Road is back in action – \$100,000 later – after a massive 30,000 cubic metres of soil slipped off the hill in early July, across the council road and on to private property north of the beachfront houses.

Roading engineer Dennis Malone says that rather than attempt to remove the 12m deep mountain of soil, a road was built over the top. The road was contoured, huge crevices sealed and geotech cloth

laid before the new road was metalled.

The slip occurred within days of heavy rain lashing the district. Road access was cut off for about 20 properties at the northern end of Anaura Bay and Nuhiti for several days until a temporary road was installed.

Mr Malone says the stability of the land above the slip remains a concern.

“Ideally, the area should be fenced off, retired from

grazing and planted with suitable cover crops.”

The cost of repairs is included in the estimated \$2.7M in damage caused to roads across the district during the July rain. The New Zealand Transport Agency has provided \$860,000 towards the cost to date.

Severely damaged roads include Whakarau, Hikuwai, Tiniroto, Wharekopae, Pehiri, Makeretu, Kanakanaia – many of which suffered dropouts up to the centreline of the road.

## Hall Street footbridge widened and strengthened

The much-used, 40-year-old Hall Street footbridge has undergone a transformation and will be narrow no more.

The bridge has been widened to three metres, replaced with new timber and hand rails, and the whole structure earthquake-strengthened to give it another 25 years’ active life.

Roading engineer Dennis Malone says the \$90,000 upgrade is expected to encourage even more than the 100 people a day who currently walk, cycle, skate and mobility scooter across it to and from Whataupoko and the city.

The footbridge linking Hall and Thomson streets was built in late 1969 to replace an ornate but dilapidated footbridge between Ballance Street and the Botanical Gardens.

Steel joists salvaged from the old William Pettie Bridge were used in the construction of the footbridge in 1969.

The recycling tradition continues with decking removed from the footbridge now destined for Anzac Park where it will form a launching ramp for the kayak club. Lengths of marine-treated Pinus radiata decking have now been hammered down in a horizontal alignment like its down-river counterpart, the Derby Street footbridge, upgraded last year. Approaches to the footbridge will be tidied up and lighting possibly installed later.



As strengthening work takes place underneath the Hall St footbridge, James Kissling (Fulton Hogan) builds the new deck on top.

## Motu Trails approval prompts action

Come the summer of 2011/12, cycling one of the newly opened Motu Trails tracks is bound to be a popular family holiday option.

But until then, it’s all hands to the deck as resource consents are gained, designs finalised, construction started, marketing begun and maintenance procedures developed.

Motu Trails is under way thanks to a successful combined application from Gisborne and Opotiki councils and the Department of Conservation. The trail was named in July as one of eight “great rides” to be built around the country, taking cyclists through some of New Zealand’s most iconic and picturesque country. The NZ Cycle Trail Fund contributed \$1.74M towards construction and DoC has made a significant financial contribution to parts on its estate.

District policy team leader Kim Smith, who was part of the combined application, is thrilled to get through the hoops.

“We worked hard on our application and were lucky to make it. It’s not every day you get \$1.74 million.” She says the trail will use a network of unsealed public roads in the Motu and Pakihi valleys.

“Two different routes will be promoted from Matawai to Opotiki either via the Old Coach Road and through the Tirohanga dune conservation area, or via part of the Old Coach Road and through the Pakihi Track. A loop option would start and finish at Opotiki and

take in the Tirohanga dunes, the Old Coach Road and the Pakihi Track.”

The trail is expected to foster economic development and entrepreneurship as rural communities look at opportunities for bed and breakfast, nature trails and the like.

“There could be potential for shuttle services so cyclists could be dropped off to do part of the track. We will keep the communities informed about progress. We appreciate the help received so far and the enthusiasm for the trail.”

With mountain-biking believed to be surpassing tramping as a popular family activity, Motu Trails is expected to be hugely popular.

## Councillors end terms

Long-serving Gisborne ward councillors Hemi Hikawai and Kathy Sheldrake have retired from the Council table.

First voted on in 1992, Mr Hikawai spent six terms in office. Mrs Sheldrake, voted on in 2001, says her strength lay in helping people with individual issues. As a “lone voice”, she lobbied for cycle lanes and instigated the Gisborne Walking and Cycling Trust in 2005. She was disappointed government funding for the Wainui walk/cycleway was cancelled but hoped more councillors would lobby for walking and cycling issues in future. She thanked the community for their support and Council staff for their professionalism and concern for local issues.

## Tsunami due to hit with Exercise Tangaroa

Mark 20 October in your diaries. That’s the date communities and civil defence groups throughout New Zealand will test their preparedness for a tsunami in Exercise Tangaroa.

Emergency management officer Richard Steele stresses that while this is an exercise, it is important Gisborne people – especially those in areas likely to be affected by a distant tsunami – take it seriously. As part of the exercise, residents will be encouraged to self-evacuate and barriers will be put up between Kahutia Street and city beaches. In this scenario,

residents could be out of their homes for eight to 12 hours.

What can you do? Find out if your house is in an evacuation zone. Go to [www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz) or ring Council 867 2049. Pre-plan your escape route and where you can stay for eight to 12 hours.

Read the inside back page of the phone book. Follow directions from Gisborne Civil Defence or Gisborne Police. DO NOT go sightseeing.

Listen to radio station 945AM or 98.9FM and see The Gisborne Herald for more information.

## Olympic Pool cheaper to run on woodchips from waste timber

The new Austrian-made, woodchip-fired boiler now operating at the Olympic Pool is expected to benefit the district with a \$40,000 a year reduction in fuel costs and the creation of new business opportunities.

Installed in June, the boiler uses woodchips made from timber offcuts which in the past would have been waste. Corporate affairs manager Douglas Birt

says the pool is now a carbon neutral system.

“We are not burning fossil fuels and the money that previously went to an international gas company is now going to a local firm with profits poured back into the city. Wood chips are supplied by firewood contractor Kevin McBreen who bought a wood chipper and modified his truck to suit the job.”

Little ash or smoke emanates from the boiler because

it burns to 92 percent efficiency. The boiler can be monitored continuously from local operators and even from the manufacturer in Austria. This allows for timely and efficient optimisation of performance. The boiler and its installation cost \$540,000. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority have provided a grant of \$150,000 and a five-year, interest-free loan of \$319,000.

# In short

## SecondHand Sunday now monthly

Council's popular SecondHand Sunday changes from biannually to monthly on 2 October, and from then will be held on the first Sunday of every month, excluding January, between 9am and noon.

Environmental health educator Anne Lister says more than 150 people usually register for the event and even more put out second-hand goods in the hope their goods will be taken away.

"It's fun. People love getting something for nothing." Register to let people know where your treasures are by emailing [service@gdc.govt.nz](mailto:service@gdc.govt.nz). Put SecondHand Sunday in the subject line and your address in the message. Registrations will be advertised on Council's website and Saturday's newspaper.

## Are you eligible for rates rebate?

Have you checked to see if you are eligible for a rates rebate? You might be pleasantly surprised. Ratepayers can earn more than the income threshold of \$22,340 and still receive a rates rebate of up to \$570. For example, a ratepayer whose household income was \$30,000 for the year ended 31 March 2010 would still receive the full rebate of \$570 if their rates were \$2600 a year. A ratepayer earning \$34,000 a year could still receive a rebate of \$169 if their rates were \$2600.

The rise in rates has seen a flurry of rebate claims. In the first two months of the 2010/11 year, 1032 claims worth \$565,321 were made. This is more than half the 1814 ratepayers who had rates rebates of \$946,000 approved in the 2009/10 year.

## Time to check riverbank trees

Please help keep our rivers free from debris. It's time for landowners and managers to check their riverbanks, safely remove dead and fallen trees, and prune other vegetation and trees that could fall over and end up in waterways. The aim is to keep tree roots anchoring the banks and prevent dead trees and limbs blocking waterways or bridges during flooding.

## Welcome areas to give sense of arrival

The entrances to the city are undergoing a rethink. With the Welcome to Gisborne signs on both sides of the river somewhat past their use-by dates, Council is looking to develop a more impressive welcome that provides a sense of arrival at somewhere special. Community facilities asset manager Terry McMillan says the idea is to develop a place where people can stop and understand part of the story about Gisborne /Turanganui a Kiwa.

"We want a more significant entrance where people can pull up alongside and learn about how people arrived here. We will work with the runanga and iwi on both sides of the river to develop concepts."

## eDay will take unwanted TVs this year

Keep an ear out for this year's eDay, possibly in early November. This is the day that people all over New Zealand take the chance to get rid of unwanted computer equipment. This year eDay will also take unwanted televisions, stereos, mobile phones and small electrical appliances. The event relies on volunteers to help on the day. If you would like to help, please contact [service@gdc.govt.nz](mailto:service@gdc.govt.nz)

## Litter song could win recording

Intermediate and high school students are vying for the chance to have a studio recording of their original songs about litter and dumping. Matapuna Training Centre, in conjunction with Council's environmental health section, has produced a DVD on litter which is being presented to intermediate and high schools around the district. Students are writing songs to go with the litter theme. They can enter online and the winner will have their song recorded in a studio. This may then be played on radio.

## Service gets more excellent by the month

Keeping people informed is the key to the impressive increase in the number of excellents reported for the customer service team. In July, 80 percent of Council's customers said the service they received was excellent, far exceeding the 50 percent target set by management last year.

Corporate affairs manager Douglas Birt says this rating puts Council in the top echelon of successful businesses.

"If even 60 percent of people say service is excellent, you are in the top section because excellent is not a word that trips easily off the tongues of New Zealanders."

He attributes the increase to asking a third question

when surveying the 10 percent of callers requesting a Council service. In the past, customers were asked to rate the service received for promptness and for the overall service received.

"The main reason most people rated their overall service as poor was because of the time involved, the promptness of the service. Then in May we added a third question – Were you kept informed? Activity managers then made sure their customers were kept informed, and the excellents increased. "It's all about managing customer expectations. People understand if there is a delay for whatever reason as long as they are kept informed. As a result, the complaints dropped dramatically."



District librarian Pene Walsh (left) with library planning specialist Nicki Moen in one of the facility's particularly narrow aisles.

## Cramped library treasure needs space

Gisborne's H. B. Williams Memorial Library may be an architectural treasure but the beautiful building is cramped and crowded, and not fully serving its people.

Library planning specialist Nicki Moen, who oversaw the redevelopment of Christchurch libraries, is now studying the feasibility of extending Gisborne's library and will help determine a future shape after discussion with key people and councillors, and a review of other communities' projects.

She says libraries are not just about books.

"Libraries are still about literacy and numeracy and will have books and computers. An extended library will be relevant to people's lives. It's a place

the community owns and will go and use, and want to be proud of."

Most of all, she says, a library needs space – for young children to reach books at their height, young adults and their different needs, meeting rooms, engaging with others such as a floor chess game, or just sitting and thinking in a quiet place.

Library improvements, as she had overseen in Christchurch, generally see a 30 percent rise in usage within a month. Gisborne's library is Council's most-used facility with 5000 people visiting each week, 7000 a week during school holidays. The feasibility study is for the library extension, programmed in the Community Plan for the 2013/14 year.

## Looking at how best to manage water resource

A lot of water talk is going on around the district as Council staff get to grips with how fresh water is used and valued in different communities.

Natural resources team leader Yvette Kinsella says Council is in the throes of developing a water management plan, which councils around the country are required to produce. In Gisborne, the focus to date has been on the Poverty Bay Flats.

"We're identifying and trying to balance economic, social, recreation, amenity, ecological and cultural values.

"A study has been completed on the ecological values and fish species of the Waipaoa River catchment including Te Arai River, and we have started identifying tangata whenua values of Te Arai with Ngati Ruapani. Community engagement is important and staff are looking at options including setting up a freshwater advisory group of people with an interest in the issue."

The research work is mostly funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the National Institute for

Water and Atmosphere and the Cawthron Institute are also involved. Yvette says a lot of good discussion has been held to date with people explaining what they value about different bodies of fresh water.

"We are trying to understand the resource on the flats, how much water is coming into the rivers through ground water, rainfall and surface water and how much is going out to help us understand the total allocation volumes. Then we can start looking at how the water resource can be managed."

A public discussion document is expected to go to Council in December 2011.

## Helping people to have a say

Much work has been going on to encourage people to vote in the upcoming local body elections. This month, the Gisborne Voter Participation Project team was to visit 1000 households in areas that in the 2007 elections had less than 30 percent of the community turn out to vote. The project team explains the local body election process and emphasises the importance of "having a say".

# Sculptures to enliven city before year's end

By the end of the year, Gisborne will have three new statues to admire.

The Beijing Olympics statue known as Evolution will be in place near the Rose Garden; the Voyager sculpture, sporting fibreglass rods made by Pultron Composites, will sprout up from the Waikanae Stream bank near the Grey Street Bridge; and the stone Waihihorore will finally be unveiled beside the Pitt Street urupa, where bodies found in the excavation of the Warehouse and apartment blocks site were buried.

Gifted by the Chinese government, the 4 tonne bronze Evolution statue of an archer will reach more than three metres high once positioned on its concrete plinth beside the Taruheru River.

Artist Kon Dimopoulos is expected to begin installing his Voyager sculpture in the next few months. Dimopoulos has for years used Gisborne-made Pultron fibreglass rods for his dynamic sculptures installed around the world.

Community facilities asset manager Terry McMillan says Pultron thought it appropriate to have one of his sculptures in Gisborne and contributed materials to make this happen. Other contributions came from Professor Jack Richards and Council through its public art budget.

Night lighting will enhance the installation and enable reflections off the water.

"This fits in with other strategies, and will help provide a connection between the town and the beach.

"We hope to get more people putting money into specific art projects and are considering various ideas for fundraising including art auctions. We want to give more artists the opportunity to become involved."

Council is calling for expressions of interest for an artwork reflecting the theme of powhiri, welcome and challenge, which is destined for a place on the Turanganui riverbank walkway near the double koru paving. The budget is \$70,000.

"Our arts strategy focus is on reflecting our community. Even though we make allowances, like the Beijing archers sculpture, the idea is for people to get a sense of place and culture of our community."

## 'First-class' Waikanae precinct planned

The Waikanae Project sounds rather secret squirrel but is in fact a hugely public joint venture between Council and Eastland Community Trust with a strong focus on "doing".

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

Council chief executive Lindsay McKenzie says collaboration is vital as individual projects generally struggle to get support. The precinct could include a variety of sports facilities, walk/cycleways, residential and commercial investment, the navigational traditions project and relocated heavy traffic route. "Council agrees the Waikanae precinct is worthy of a coordinated approach to community development and investment. A concept plan will be prepared for the overall project and a relationship entered into

with ECT to ensure the aim is realised.

"We want to make the precinct first class for leisure and cultural activities, and the catalyst for redeveloping nearby residential and industrial lands."

"Some very long-term planning issues are involved. The initiative is designed to solve not create problems, and bring together the relative strengths of Council, ECT and others."

The hockey turf could go ahead without the concept plan. Nearly two years ago, Council decided in principle to lease part of Churchill Park to the Poverty Bay Hockey Association to develop artificial turf grounds, subject to the group having the necessary funding.

"We're looking at what uses the status of the land permits. If the reserve status limits the use, the impasse will be resolved because only another sporting code could go there."



Plant Biosecurity Officer  
Darryl Coulter

## Problem plants...

Grab the tissues, it's hayfever time again.

Pollen from golden wattle and pine trees is already lining the air and streets, closely followed by pollen from grasses and Chinese and tree privet. The introduced golden wattle tree (pictured above) contributes to the dispersal of yellow pollen at this time of the year but it's unclear whether this has an impact on health.

Chinese privet, often used as hedging, is widely believed to contribute to allergies and asthma, as is tree privet. But grass pollen is believed to be one of the worst offenders.

The control of privet by land occupiers is voluntary. For advice on plant and animal pests, contact Council or see [www.gdc.govt.nz/pests](http://www.gdc.govt.nz/pests)

## ...and problem pests

If you have seen one rat or mouse at your place, you can be sure there will be more. Rats and mice are continuing to be a pest as winter's weather and lean supplies force them to seek food and shelter.



Senior environmental health officer Judith Robertson says the best approach is to clean up your property and wipe them out with poison.

"Correct baiting is critical – baiting for at least two weeks after all rats and mice appear to have gone, and not underfeeding them. Use fresh bait and protect it from the weather. Put down several lots fairly close together to make sure mice eat enough of it. But make sure you put bait where pets and children cannot reach it."

Council provides poison at a small cost.



NZ Transport Agency has funded the widening of the bridge across the Waikanae Stream and will soon install a barrier between the highway and the walk and cycleway. As part of the Tairawhiti Navigational Traditions Project, a footbridge is planned across the Turanganui River from near the Cook Statue (top right) to the slipway dividing the harbour and river, near where Maori and European first met each other on the rock, Te Toka a Taiau.

## Navigational traditions project gearing up

The much-talked-about Tairawhiti Navigational Traditions Project is revving up. Council is now taking a lead role in managing the project – on behalf of the Tairawhiti Development Partnership – and in so doing has attracted \$157,000 in funding from NZ Trade & Enterprise, \$25,000 from Eastland Community Trust and \$15,000 from Eastland Port.

Joint project manager Peter Higgs says the aim is to develop various sites where viewing facilities and information boards can successfully portray the region's navigational heritage. The main sites are the inner harbour, Titirangi, and Wairoa's Rangihoua Pa and Pilot's Hill. The Tairawhiti Museum will be the project's commercial hub.

Mr Higgs is managing the infrastructure required and

fellow joint manager Nedine Thatcher-Swann, the regional interpretation and business concept model. Both parts need to be sufficiently developed by May 2011 to present to potential funders.

"The aim is to apply for grants from the Lotteries Significance Fund and ECT for the \$6M estimated to be required. But no one will look at it unless we have a sound business plan", Nedine Thatcher-Swann says. "As part of this business plan, the working group will look at how tourism operators can benefit by adding value. And we are looking at how each site's stories can be communicated."

Gisborne sites will be linked by walkways, Mr Higgs says. A walkway will extend from the Cook Landing Site along the existing Rakaiatane Road, down to the

inner harbour. A pathway will be developed along the river training wall between the Turanganui River and the inner harbour.

"It will extend to the old slipway site and provide access to view Te Toka a Taiau where the first meeting of our two cultures took place. The plan is to build a footbridge across the Turanganui River adjacent to the bronze statue of Captain Cook.

"Aesthetics and structural form are critically important. The new structure must blend well with the surrounding landscape. We want to ensure we have artistic and cultural alignment with the project."

Contractors and leading artists have been asked to register an interest, and consultants sought to develop a business concept model.