

NEWSLINE

15 AUGUST 2024



NEW CITIZENS WELCOMED

Some long-term Waimate residents officially became New Zealand citizens at a ceremony at the Waimate Event Centre last month.

At the ceremony the new citizens, who are all from the United Kingdom, took an official oath of allegiance to New Zealand and the King, and sang the national anthem for the first time as official Kiwis. A specially prepared video from the Department of Internal Affairs was played and the new citizens and their guests wrapped up by sharing a morning tea with elected members.

Congratulations to Karen Buckley, Paul Buckley, Ralph Bullock, and Susan Caird, who are pictured with Mayor Craig Rowley.



CAMPING FEES SET FOR 2024/25 SEASON

Council has set the fees and charges for the Waimate Lakes Camping activity for the 2024/25 season.

The cost of a season pass has risen to \$500, up from \$450 last season. The price for a family pass has been increased from \$25 per night to \$30.

When coming to the decision, Council had to balance the desire to keep the camping affordable, while also ensuring campers who benefit from the well-maintained facilities pay an appropriate share. Of all the visitors to the area last year, only 14% came from the Waimate District.

Overall, the activity continues to run at a loss, with the deficit to 30 June 2024 estimated at \$97,000, which is an improvement of approximately \$28,000 compared to the previous year's deficit of \$125,000. This reduction is a direct result of increased fees and charges implemented last year.

The deficit is funded by the camping activity reserve (built up from surpluses from prior years), however this has been depleting since 2019 and Council has been moving towards a break-even price structure.

"We want to keep camping affordable for everyone but unfortunately our costs have been rising over the past few years and we need to keep the facilities up to a good standard. The season pass works out to be \$15.50 per week, which is far cheaper than most camping grounds in the country."

"A recent survey showed an overall camping experience rating of 89%, so we feel we are on the right track."

Opening day will be 14 September 2024, with gates opening at 8am and the last day of the season will be 27 April 2025.

FAMOUS HUT RESTORED

Restoration work on the famous hut at Knottingley Park and Arboretum has been completed.

The hut is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Waimate. It was built in 1864 and was moved to its current site in 1929, as part of the Waimate Jubilee Year celebrations. Originally made from sawn totara slabs, the roof structure and roof panels have been rotting and past repair works have been done with pine.

Council wanted to bring the original look back as much as possible and sourced appropriate materials to do this, including redwood which is similar to the original totara and kauri. The structure was stabilised, and the roof and rotting panels were replaced.



CREATIVE NZ COMMUNITIES GRANT

Council invites applications for financial assistance from clubs, groups and organisations within Waimate District for the Creative NZ Communities Grant.

If you have an idea for a project that might support community involvement in the arts, engage young people in the arts or create cultural diversity in the arts – be sure to apply.

Applications can be submitted online at waimatedc.govt.nz/grants or printed forms are available from the Waimate Event Centre. Enquiries can be made to the Grants Administrator.

All applications must be received by 12pm on Thursday 5 September 2024 by using the online form, emailed to info@waimatedc.govt.nz, or delivered to the Waimate Event Centre, 15 Paul Street, Waimate.

Please ensure all relevant information is attached with your application, as incomplete and late applications will not be accepted.

REPRESENTATION REVIEW FINAL PROPOSAL

The representation arrangements for the Waimate District Council are proposed to remain in place for the 2025 and 2028 local elections, pending an appeal process.

At an Ordinary Council Meeting on 23 July 2024, Council decided to keep the status quo for the makeup of its elected members and how they are elected.

To fulfil legislative requirements, any person who made a formal submission to the initial proposal has until 12pm on Thursday 29 August 2024 to appeal the decision.

Council's initial proposal was made in line with public feedback gathered from a survey sent out to every household in the district.

Of the 225 responses, 72% agreed Council should continue to be made up of eight councillors and the mayor, and 63% agreed Councillors should continue to be elected by wards as opposed to at large, or a mix of the two.

Mayor Craig Rowley said it was clear the public favoured the status quo.

"The feedback from our residents showed most people are happy with the way things are," Mayor Rowley said.

All local councils are required to carry out a representation review every six years.

WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN SET OUT

Council approved its Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2024-30 at an Extraordinary Council Meeting last month.

Public consultation took place between 28 May and 1 July. Six submissions were received, of which five were in favour of the plan.

The Waste Minimisation Act 2008 requires Council to complete a full review of the plan every six years.

The document is a strategic document aimed at guiding the district's waste management efforts. The plan outlines Council's vision and targets for managing and minimising waste, as well as the associated costs.

Key strategies to achieve these targets include educating and encouraging the community to adopt better waste management practices, ensuring the provision of adequate waste services and facilities for collection, processing and disposal, and regulating waste services to ensure they are provided effectively and efficiently.

Mayor Craig Rowley said at the meeting that Waimate is "ahead of the game" with its waste management systems, having introduced a four-bin system in 2021. He emphasised that the new plan builds on existing achievements and explores opportunities to adopt circular economic principles, aiming to divert more waste from refuse bins and ensure equitable access to rubbish collection services across the district.

The plan is available to view on Council's website.

NATIONAL POETRY DAY CELEBRATION

The Pop-Up Library is hosting Waimate Whispers & Wisdom – an afternoon of poetry readings and local talent to celebrate National Poetry Day on 23 August.

Local poets Karalyn Reid and Mason Gilbert will be sharing their published works, showcasing their evocative language and heartfelt verse.

Participants are also invited to share their own original poems or a favourite piece during the open mic session. This is a great opportunity to enjoy poetry, discover local talent, and connect with the community.

The event will take place next Friday from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. It is free to attend and open to anyone aged 16 and over.

Space is limited, so please register by contacting Tony or Karen at the Library on library@waimatedc.govt.nz or 03 689 0071.

FUNDING FOR CYCLE TRAIL

Council has committed funds to support the construction of a cycle trail between Waimate and the Waihao Forks.

At an Ordinary Council Meeting on 23 July, Council was asked to consider a funding request for \$500,000 from project lead Waimate2gether.

The 13km offroad trail would travel through the Waimate Gorge, along the old railway line in Arno and past the limestone rocks, before ending at the Waihao Forks. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$2 million.

Council agreed for an initial \$100,000 to be granted to the project subject to Waimate2gether securing the remaining funds from other sources. This will be reviewed after two years if the funds have not been secured.

The potential for a further \$150,000 to be granted will be consulted on next year as part of the Long Term Plan 2025-34.

The funds will come from Council's Subdivision Contribution Reserve Fund, which is separate from rates. It is drawn from residential subdivision and developments in the district to fund projects which increase the range of public open space and recreation areas and facilities that meet the needs of residents and visitors to the district.

Mayor Craig Rowley commended Waimate2gether for the work it had done on the project, noting it would be a great asset for the town.

