

RANGITĪKEI Connect

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ISSUE FOUR



FROM THE Mayor's Desk

I was delighted to attend the Doors Open Marton parade on Saturday which celebrated community, friendship and business and recognised essential workers for their efforts during COVID-19. This was organised by Emily Rayner and Lindsey Robinson; my thanks and appreciation goes to these two women. The community appreciated this initiative – it was a fantastic day with a fantastic result.

Last week saw the conclusion of the District Plan hearings – proposing a change for some land from rural to industrial. The decision now rests with the Commissioner who will hopefully provide a decision within the next 2 – 3 weeks. If the decision is made to progress a District Plan change then there is a subsequent consent process for any industry.

We have a number of live applications submitted to Minister Jones's Provincial Growth Fund (PGF). I have already advised publicly that we have a potential rail siding as part of this process. There has also been requests by Government for us to submit shovel-ready projects for funding, which we have done - these are projects that are ready to go and would create employment if they were approved now. But bear in mind that every Council and organisation in New Zealand has the same opportunity – and it is a first-in first-served basis. However the good news is that the outcome of these applications will be told to us in a timely manner – a decision is expected within the next two weeks, so I am waiting with bated breath.

As part of the Council's Annual Plan process I had envisaged meeting with a large number of community groups across our district, until this was prevented by alert levels during our COVID-19 pandemic. I happy to start this process now, even though the Annual Plan has been adopted by Council. I see this as a two-step process – I will answer any questions around the 2020/21 Annual Plan and also start gathering information towards our Long Term Plan process. I am happy to meet any member of the community individually, but would prefer to meet with community groups, right throughout the district – I can be contacted directly on my cellphone (027 617 7668) or ring me at the Council on 0800 422 522.

Work is still continuing on the new Bulls Community Centre, staff are working with the interior designers around the fit out, and as part of the contract, staff and contractors are working on the carpark and community square areas.

As everybody is aware the issue of the Captain James Cook statue in Marton was raised when we were alerted it was likely to be vandalised, the decision was made to protect the statue until Council engaged with local iwi, Runanga Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa, to understand their view. Subsequently, last week Council issued a joint public statement by Pahia Tuia, Chair of Runanga Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa and myself as Mayor. In summary, the statement said the statue should remain, but the plaque would be removed. We also agreed to start an education programme, for both European and Māori on early history and heritage. We are fortunate in our district to have a fantastic relationship with Iwi, which enables us to have a genuine, frank discussion about issues such as this. It is certainly time that we knew more about our District's early history. The bonus with the issue around the Captain Cook statue has given us the opportunity to have that conversation.

Ngā mihi, **Andy Watson**, Mayor of Rangitikei District.

Mahi Tahī - Rangitikei Employment Programme

Rangitikei District Council is working in collaboration with the Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs, the Ministry of Social Development and Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa Business and Education Centre on an employment initiative with the focus on people living in the Rangitikei who are looking for work, and businesses looking for staff.

The collective community approach to this programme has a focus on individual training, holistic wellbeing and success for both jobseekers and business.

We have employers looking for jobs with immediate start. If you have recently been made unemployed, and/or need work, or if you are a business that is needing workers to meet your needs or requirements, you can register your interest with us.

To find out more, contact James Towers: james.towers@rangitikei.govt.nz or 020 4168 6902.



FB: Mahi Tahī - Rangitikei Employment Programme

RANGITĪKEI LINE

Council Bulletin

2020/21 Annual Plan

Following Council's meeting on 28 May 2020, the Mayor and several Councillors reviewed the detailed financial estimates and agreed on the budget for 2020/21. Council adopted the 2020/21 Annual Plan and the associated rates resolution at its meeting on 25 June 2020. The average increase in rates in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 is 3.63%, considerably less than the 6.27% increase projected for 2020/21 in the 2018-28 Long Term Plan.

The major capital projects for 2020/21 are: Scotts Ferry stormwater upgrades, the Bulls Community Centre, the Bulls reservoir, pipeline design for the Marton and Bulls combined wastewater scheme, the Marton Civic Centre, the Marton water strategy, the new Mangaweka Bridge and the new amenities block on Taihape Memorial Park.

Council and Committee meetings

The normal cycle of meetings of all Council committees and Community Boards will begin in July 2020. Council meetings will continue to be live-streamed to Council's Facebook page.

Management contract for waste transfer stations extended

Smart Environmental will continue to manage the Council's waste transfer stations until 30 June 2022, a role they have fulfilled since 2015. By 30 June 2021, Council will conduct a review of options to deliver this service – this is a requirement of section 17A in the Local Government Act 2002. This will provide sufficient time to implement whatever arrangement Council determines will apply from 1 July 2022. This could be a new contract, a shared service with another council or internal delivery.

Adoption of a rates postponement policy

At its meeting on 25 June 2020, following public consultation, Council adopted a rates postponement policy. When rates are postponed, payment is deferred without penalty but the whole rates will still be due. Postponement of rates will be available when Council defines an event as potentially resulting in financial hardship for ratepayers (and determines the annual administrative fee to be charged during the period rates are postponed). Those details will be addressed at Council's meeting on 30 July 2020. Council has also confirmed its current rates remission policy.

Bulls Community Centre

Construction completion has been delayed because of the Covid-19 response. The new finish date is the end of July, meaning the facility will be open by the end of September. Design work on the bus lane and town square has started, and the artist creating the cultural design elements has produced a design for the interior and exterior of the building in consultation with iwi.

Trial kerbside rubbish collection in Taihape to continue – until February 2021 at least

The trial period which Council agreed to was interrupted by the Covid-19 alert responses. Council has agreed to the request from



Rangitikei Wheelie Bins for an extension to allow more time to build up a viable business in Taihape. The trial will run to end of February 2021 with a review at the end of October 2020.

Intermediary role proposed for Community Board and Community Committee chairs

From time to time, an individual resident or business is dissatisfied with how Council has addressed an issue, even though Council considers the actions reasonable and fair. At present the only available option is for someone to request the Ombudsman investigate the matter. Council has agreed to an alternative mechanism, involving the chairs of the Community Boards and Community Committees to act as intermediaries, listening to both sides of the story and conveying their view.

This proposal will be discussed at the July meetings of Community Boards and Community Committees.

Marton's statue of Captain James Cook

There has been much debate around colonial monuments, statue and place-names across New Zealand. Marton became a focus of this because of the Captain Cook statue in Broadway. The statue has been there since 2004, following discussion with many interested people, including shop-owners.

On 17 June 2020, Council erected boxing around the statue, as it was made aware of a threat that the statue would be vandalised. Council then engaged with Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa to gain further insight on the issues which the statue presented. At its meeting on 25 June 2020, the Mayor and Councillors all shared their views: there was consensus that the boxing should be removed together with the plaque on the plinth (which stated that Cook discovered New Zealand) and that there be further conversation about ways of increasing knowledge and understanding of our shared past. A statement jointly prepared by Pahia Tuia, Chair of the Rūnanga Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa, and Mayor Andy Watson has been posted on Council's website.

District Plan Change – rural to industrial

The hearing for the District Plan Change started on Wednesday 17 June 2020 and was adjourned the following day to allow further evidence to be provided to the Commissioner, Mr Robert Schofield. That is now all uploaded to the Council's website. The Commissioner's decision is expected by 16 July 2020.