

NEWSLINE

MAY 2022



MAYOR'S COLUMN



If you haven't yet heard, Council have recently agreed to a 9.9% rates increase for the upcoming financial year. The increase is 2.3% higher than the 7.6% forecast in the 2021-31 Long Term Plan, though with escalating costs, contract variances and the necessary introduction of new roles within Council, this increase is required.

Let's be clear, as your elected members, the last thing we want to do is increase rates. However, while it would be easy to keep rates low and not replace infrastructure, keep pace with general maintenance and meet our statutory obligations, it's important as a Council we maintain the levels of service that meets regulatory requirements and continue to deliver on the service expected from our community.

Meanwhile, many of you may be wondering where things are with the Government's three waters reform programme. It appears the Government are continuing to push this reform through, though as a fully fledged member of Communities 4 Local Democracy, we are strongly opposing this concept. In addition, Council are presently working through the details for another public meeting, so once more is known on this, we will publicise this through Council's advertising and news outlets.

In other news, the Waimate Lakes camping season has officially drawn to a close for another year. Having spoken briefly to our camp supervisors on site, it has proven to be another largely successful season, both on numbers and overall compliance. Well done to all involved and we look forward to building on this next season.

In other news, the company behind the proposed waste-to-energy plant has announced the purchase of 15 hectares of land near Glenavy. For the record, Council do not have any view on this and remain impartial throughout. If the plant is to go ahead, it will need to apply for resource consents from both this Council and Environment Canterbury. They have chosen to publicly notify this process, therefore there will be plenty of opportunity for submissions should this proposal proceed.

Until next month, stay safe out there and take care.

INTRODUCING MARK OFFEN . . .



Mark Offen is passionate about the safety and wellbeing of both his colleagues and community, so it's no surprise he has recently jumped into the shoes of Council's Emergency Management and Health and Safety Advisor.

Mark, who was born and bred in St Andrews, joins Council with a 30-year background in the New Zealand Police and vast experience in compliance and liquor licensing. As a former police senior sergeant, Mark understands the importance of good networking and in his first few weeks has already begun introducing himself to various key stakeholders throughout the community.

While there are many transferable skills Mark brings to the table, he views his new role as something of a fresh challenge, with duties extending to health and safety and civil defence. Commenting on the road ahead, post-pandemic, Mark says the Waimate District has shown great resilience in the face of adversity, but believes it is now important to align all future efforts towards recovery.

"We've got to look ahead and together, move on. Physically, psychologically, financially there's been a lot of pain, but there's some great times ahead and we need to look forward to that.

"For the most part of my career, I've served the community and this role was an opportunity to give something back to the area that was good to me growing up . . . my own community."

Hailing from an extensive background in sports and coaching, Mark is a professional tennis coach and has enjoyed previous stints coaching senior football throughout the region. Outside of work, Mark is on the board of Tennis South Canterbury and loyally follows the English Premier League, spurring Liverpool to victory most weekends. He also owns a Timaru-based motel and has recently become a grandfather, with little Asher expected to keep him on his toes.

So, if you see Mark around, be sure to say hello.

ANZAC DAY - LEST WE FORGET



As the risks of COVID-19 continue to linger on throughout the region, the RSA made a decision not to proceed with a public civic service, ensuring minimal numbers attend. However, with the red traffic light setting lifted by Government just a matter of days before ANZAC Day, many locals took the opportunity to pay their respects at one of several ANZAC services held within the Waimate District.

As the clock struck 6am, a small Dawn Parade was carried out at the memorial gates of Victoria Park, prior to a 10am service at the Waimate cenotaph and a larger gathering at the Waihao Forks for the annual commemoration of Ted d'Auvergne and the infamous bottle of beer. Moving renditions of The Last Post rang out across the district, while Waimate District Mayor Craig Rowley was on hand to address the crowd, both members of the public, invited guests and special dignitaries. The day was concluded with a brief gathering at the Waimate Cemetery to remember all those that have gone before us. Elsewhere, poppies and wreaths adorned the district's cenotaphs.

If you missed the action or want to relive any of the services, head to the Deputy Mayors Desk Facebook page to watch the livestream footage.

Lest we forget.

COUNCIL AGREES TO 9.9% RATES INCREASE

As budgets are set for the upcoming financial year, councillors have agreed to a proposed rates increase of 9.9%, reflecting escalating costs, contract variances and the necessary introduction of new roles within Council.

The increase, which is 2.3% higher than the 7.6% forecast in the 2021-31 Long Term Plan (LTP), will also enable Council to push ahead with the long-awaited library extension and refurbishment, the installation of new public toilets within Seddon Square (exact location to be confirmed) and the refit of the council chambers and meeting room that will also accommodate the introduction of natural light into the room. Both the library extension and public toilets have been budgeted for in multiple Long Term Plans.

In addition to these scheduled upgrades, the budget increase supports Council's ability to meet current and emerging work-streams including Road Asset Information, Asset Management Administration and a variety of Government Reform activities. The revised budget will also enable Council to recruit a Climate Change/Biodiversity Officer – a position jointly funded by Environment Canterbury and closely aligned with Council's direction and local action on climate change.

Last year, through consultation on the LTP, Council predicted a rates rise of 7.6% in 2022/23. The additional 2.3% increase proposed in this year's budget accounts for other factors such as employment cost increases, depreciation, contract variations in waste management, increases in election costs, cleaning contracts, treasury management, audit fees, building control consultancy and a variety of computer software.

The 2022/23 Annual Plan is expected to be adopted by 30 June 2022.

***For more information on these projects, keep an eye out in next week's Timaru Courier for a Newsline Special Edition. Here, we will break the details down for each project and help to understand the costs, timeframes and benefits of each.**



WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?

STAND FOR LOCAL GOVT NOW // waimatedc.govt.nz/council/elections

SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY.
STAND FOR LOCAL GOVT.

VOTE
2022
LOCAL ELECTIONS



P. +64 3 689 0000

E. council@waimatedc.govt.nz

W. waimatedc.govt.nz