

SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL

22 FEBRUARY 2017

AGENDA ITEM E1

REPORT FROM HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR

Purpose of Report

To update Council on activities and issues which have arisen since my last report to Council.

Recommendations

Her Worship the Mayor recommends that Council:

1. *Receives the information.*
2. *Approve Mayoral attendance at the commemorative ceremony in Messines.*

1. Induction, training and strategic planning

Since the election in October Councillors have been offered training opportunities. These have been provided to give each councillor as much information about their role as possible, and take part in setting the strategic direction for this triennium.

A number of courses, workshops and the tour of council infrastructure has taken place all councillors have participated in the training.

The workshops on setting values and developing a strategic plan were very productive and constructive. We have a good base to work from.

Some of the courses have included members of the Community Boards and the Chairman of the Maori Standing Committee; this has ensured that all elected members have had an opportunity to get to know each other.

The strategic plan will feed into the Annual Plan and also run alongside the work the Mr Crimp and his staff are completing.

2. SWDC Appointment to Cobblestones Board

Cr Olds was appointed as the SWDC representative on the Cobblestones Board in October; his other Council commitments are taking more time than planned so he has indicated he would like to be replaced on the

Cobblestones Board. Councillor Wright is happy to be the SWDC representative.

3. Messines - 100th Anniversary of Battle of Messines

The 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Messines will be commemorated between 7th and 14th June 2107.¹The Messines ridge was captured by New Zealand forces, it was a stunning success and paved the way for the main attack later in the summer by removing German forces from the dominating ground on the southern face of the Ypres Salient. New Zealand suffered 3000 casualties and 700 deaths at Messines." Many of those soldiers would have trained at the Featherston Camp.

Featherston and the town of Mesen (Messines) in Belgium have been Twin Towns since 1975. Both towns have held this relationship very dearly. Wreaths are laid from the town of Messines at ANZAC Day and Armistice Day at the Featherston War Memorial.

The Town of Messines opened a visitor centre and restored the old Town Hall. The Town Square has a map of New Zealand with Featherston marked.

Many people, including Mayors, Councillors, Council Staff and members of the Featherston have visited Messines over the time of this relationship. Mayor Adrienne Staples visited Messines for the 90th commemoration.

There is to be a commemorative ceremony at the New Zealand Memorial in Mesen on June 7th. I would like council consider leave for me to attend this ceremony and show our support to Messines by the attendance of the SWDC Mayor at the commemoration.

I would also like to see this milestone commemorated in Featherston on Wednesday June 7th. I have met with a member of the ANZAC Memorial Sculpture Committee and propose a working group of ANZAC Club, Featherston Camp Memorial Trust, RSA, Heritage Museum, the Featherston Community Board as well as Council representation. I will organise a meeting time to arrange the celebration.

If this is approved, a budget analysis will be prepared for the next Council meeting.

¹ 100th anniversary of the Battle of Messines- international commemoration, WW100 New Zealand

4. MSD Intersectorial Meeting

Meeting – Date & Venue	9 February 2017, 2 – 5pm Ministry of Social Development, Central Regional Office Palmerston North
Present	Mayors from Manawatu DC, Palmerston North CC, Tararua DC, Masterton, Carterton and SWDC attended. MSD, Police, Corrections and Prisons, Housing New Zealand, Ministry of Education and Mid Central DHB gave presentations.
Key issues from meeting	<p>An introduction to Mayors from the MSD Central region from senior managers from various government departments giving an overview of the services they provide in their region.</p> <p>Wairarapa straddles 2 Regions, MSD we are in the Central Region, Police, Corrections and Prisons, Min of Education we are in the Wellington Region, Wairarapa has its own DHB and there are no Housing NZ homes in Wairarapa, all social housing is owned by Trust House and some pensioner housing by councils or Carter Court.</p> <p>Manawatu/Wanganui is looking at setting up this forum as a meeting which will be held regularly, the Wairarapa Mayors will be invited.</p> <p>We were able to share experiences with the other Mayors and the organisations. The other Mayors were interested to hear how the Wairarapa Local Alcohol Plan was developed. Information from the presentations has been circulated.</p>

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Letter from Mayor of Messines

Prepared By: Her Worship the Mayor, Viv Napier

Appendix 1 – Letter from Mayor of Messines

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Today, the people of Messines feel united with the people from Australia and New Zealand. We commemorate the many thousands young men, who gave their lives in the battle of Gallipoli, in April 1915 and those who fought and died in the battles of Messines, Ypres, Passchendale, the Somme and other places. We share in the sadness of the families left behind, who lost their husband, father, brother or son.

The people of Messines will never forget the dreadful price that New Zealand has paid for our freedom. We have the duty to keep alive the friendship and our gratitude towards the people of your country.

For that reason, the twinning of Featherston and Messines was, and still is without any doubt a highlight. The bonds originated of heroism and sacrifice between your far away country and ours, have become closer.

The very important remembrance period 2014 -2018 is now very eminent. While we speak, the old Town Hall of Messines is being restored as a prime example of post war reconstruction architecture. The building will host besides a theatre hall and the communal library, also a visitors centre. A central role in the exposition of this visitor centre will be New Zealand efforts during the Battle of Messines Ridge. The role of Featherston as training camp will also be a focus. The town council is planning to open the visitors centre on ANZAC day 2014.

We are also developing a fitting program to remember with cultural events and ceremonies the New Zealand efforts in World War One. Again Featherston and the South Wairarapa can and will play an important part in this program. We want to make Messines during the centennial (and beyond that period) the place to be for Kiwi's in Belgium. A Belgian town not only historically connected to New Zealand, but also in a cultural sense. A New Zealand house in Flanders Fields.

On behalf of the people of Messines, I salute you all, and I hope that in the future, we can even extend further the bonds of friendship between both our towns. This little part of Flanders will always remain a part of New Zealand.

Sandy Evrard - Mayor of Messines





