



January 2013

Looking South

Make your voice heard

Wairarapa's Future

Local Government Reform



The shape of local government in New Zealand is changing and council structures across the wider Wellington region are highly likely to change.

For many months now, councils throughout Wellington and Wairarapa have been discussing ideas and options for local representation and democracy across the wider Wellington region. New laws passed by Parliament in December now make it easier for councils to reorganise.

Two things are clear - change is almost certain, and Wairarapa communities need to be involved in shaping their own future, otherwise it will be decided for them.

In November 2012 South Wairarapa District Council unanimously agreed on a preferred option of a single Wairarapa council to govern our region in future. The Masterton and Carterton district councils also agreed to this. An alternative option for Wairarapa is to be part of a single Wellington council - the option adopted by the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Under both options the regional council would no longer exist. A completely new and different council will decide how rates are set and what services are delivered. That council will need to work out how the current differences in methods of funding, rating and delivering services across multiple councils are brought together under a common system.

Any major change brings uncertainty. A key consideration is: who makes the big decisions for Wairarapa - a Wairarapa council elected by and accountable to Wairarapa ratepayers, or a Wellington council that would have about 9% Wairarapa representation?

Together with Masterton and Carterton district councils, we are now consulting our communities on these two options - the only realistic ones currently available to Wairarapa.

Why do we want to hear from you? The future governance of Wairarapa is one of the most important issues to affect Wairarapa residents in recent years and the foreseeable future. We need your feedback so that you can have an impact on the way that decisions for your region are made in future.

Usually it's those with strong opinions - either way - that send feedback in these types of consultations. We'd like for that to change and for all South Wairarapa people to make their views known.

You can find more information and a leaflet with a feedback form at www.wairarapasfuture.govt.nz or at your local library or council office. We welcome your questions which you can email to feedback@wairarapasfuture.govt.nz - or put them to your councillor.

Please return your feedback form by 4 February 2013. This can be submitted online or returned to us at council offices and libraries. Take this chance to make your views known.

A Message from the Mayor

Eighteen months ago, when the three Wairarapa councils first started considering possible reorganisation of local governance, it was within the context of retaining the Greater Wellington Regional Council. At a meeting in Lower Hutt in November attended by the region's mayors and nearly one hundred and fifty councillors, the Regional Council through a presentation by its Chair, stated its preference for a super-city style model. This has since been endorsed by resolution at its December meeting. The meeting was also advised that the Regional Council intended to have a proposal ready for the Local Government Commission (LGC) in the New Year.

The abolition of the Regional Council as we know it today forces Wairarapa to consider whether it becomes a unitary authority (a council that delivers both territorial and regional functions) or becomes part of the Wellington super-city. Unfortunately, simply combining the Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils and retaining a regional council is no longer an option. Whatever your views are on this matter, and they are many and varied, the process from here is the same.

When GWRC lodges its proposal with the Local Government Commission in the New Year, the Wairarapa councils will have twenty working days to lodge any alternative they may prefer. The LGC must then consider all proposals and any other models it considers are valid then make a recommendation. If nobody opposes the recommendation, it can be passed by resolution of council.

If however the public are not happy then they can request a poll by petition. That petition requires the signatures of 10% of the population of the smallest affected council which in our case is Carterton. The poll is held for the LGC's recommendation against the status quo i.e. what we have now. For more information please visit www.wairarapasfuture.govt.nz.

Adrienne Staples
The Mayor



Coastal Reserves Review

We are updating our Management Plans and need your input!

In 2001 Council created a Rural Reserves Management Plan (RRMP) covering the management of all rural reserves in the district. It is now time to review the RRMP and officers have chosen to split it into two separate plans – Coastal Reserves and Rural Reserves. The Draft Coastal Reserves plan has been written first, and the Draft Rural Reserves plan will be written later in 2013.

The Council has approved two draft documents to go out for public consultation on 30 January 2013. The documents are set out in separate volumes:

Volume 1: Draft Coastal Reserves Management Plan contains the policies and rules for managing and using the coastal reserves, with particular attention to the reserves that contain camping areas: Te Awaiti, North Tora, South Tora and Ngawi.

Volume 2: Draft Coastal Reserves Development Plan contains proposed development plans for the coastal camping areas. The development plans created by landscape architects Environmental Challenge show simple and carefully thought out changes that retain the rural character of the reserves. The proposed development intends to make the camping areas more user-friendly and will help minimise human impact in the reserve camping grounds.

The draft documents and submission material will be available from 30 January 2013 at the following locations:



- ◆ www.swdc.govt.nz/coastal-reserves-consultation
- ◆ Council offices, 19 Kitchener Street, Martinborough
- ◆ Featherston Library
- ◆ Greytown Library
- ◆ Martinborough Library

We look forward to receiving your submission. If you have friends or family who live outside the district but enjoy visiting our reserves, we would like to hear from them too. Submissions close on 3 April 2013.

If you have questions about the plans or the submission process, please ring Jen Olson on 06 306 9611 x 842 or email Jen.Olson@swdc.govt.nz.

Library News

To all the patrons of the Martinborough Library thank you for persevering for so long with the temporary arrangement we have had in place as we work towards finding a permanent home for the Library. Several possible new locations have been considered before we settled on what we hope will be a location that works well for the community. At the time of going to print we are still finalising the details of the lease and expect to make an announcement as soon as the ink is dry. If everything goes to plan we would like to see the library fully operational from the new location by late February/ early March 2013.

As part of the process to prepare for the move, we have been undertaking a book stock rejuvenation and clearing out some of the older, tired books. These will all be sold at a big book sale to be held in the New Year so watch out for that. As customers and ratepayers, if you have any good ideas for the library or wish to take a more active role in the library, please do let us know by email Shirley.nightingale@swdc.govt.nz or phone 06 3069758.



Berms and trees

The Council has recently changed its contractor for the maintenance of property and reserves. The new contractor is City Care. The contract includes mowing urban street berms adjacent to Council parks and reserves.

If residents are unable or unwilling to mow their own berm Council will cut it once the grass height reaches approximately 150mm. The great majority of residents have pride in the appearance of their property and maintain their berms to a far higher standard than this. However, to mow to the same tidy well kept condition the mowing frequency would have to be roughly three times as often and of course cost three times as much.

So to keep our towns looking tidy and the berm mowing cost (and therefore your rates) down Council would appreciate residents assisting by mowing the berms outside their own properties – as most already do.

If you are unable to cut your berm, contact the Council and we will instruct City Care to cut it to keep it tidy. For everyone else, please mow your street berm and help keep our towns looking good. If the berm “has been let go” and is too long for your mower for the initial cut, also contact the Council.

Creative Communities Grants for projects commencing after 13 March 2013



Tape Art Mural at Greytown Arts Festival (Successful Applicant 2012).

Applications for South Wairarapa District Creative Communities grants are now open and will close on 22 February 2013. Applications will be considered on the 13 March 2013 and applicants will be notified shortly following. Applicants should be aware that the three Wairarapa council's assessment committees share information including applications and meeting minutes.

If you want advice on your application contact Suzanne Clark at South Wairarapa District Council, phone 06 306-9611 or suzanne.clark@swdc.govt.nz.

Application forms can be obtained from the Council office, located 19 Kitchener St, Martinborough, all libraries in the South Wairarapa and the Council website www.swdc.govt.nz.

Written applications must be addressed to:
The Committee Secretary, South Wairarapa District Council, PO Box 6 Martinborough 5741



Trees

Trees and hedges, like the grass, are growing energetically at this time. With the warmer weather people are out walking and the last thing they need is to hit their head or swipe their face on branches or vegetation overhanging the footpath or berm.

Residents are responsible for keeping the trees and hedges on their boundary pruned so that they do not overhang or obstruct pedestrians walking on berms and footpaths.

Please ensure that your trees don't overhang your street boundary lower than 2.5 metres above the ground and keep hedges cut back to the boundary line.

Rebates 2012/13

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$590 for low income earners who were paying rates for the home in which they were living on 1 July 2012.

- ◆ Your rebate will be calculated based on your income, rates and the number of dependants. The income eligibility for a rebate is \$23,650
- ◆ However if your income exceeds this amount you could still be entitled to a rebate depending on the total cost of your rates and number of dependants.
- ◆ Application forms are available from the Featherston and Greytown Libraries as well as the Council office.

Would you prefer to receive your rates by email?

We now have the facility to send rate demands by email. If you wish to receive your rate demand by email please email rates@swdc.govt.nz, and we will add your details to our database.

We encourage you to take up this option, some local authorities have up to 20% of rate demands delivered by email and at 70c per envelope the savings are considerable and of benefit to all.

Rates 2012/13 Instalment Three

Enclosed with this newsletter is the third rates assessment/invoice for the rating quarter 1 January – 31 March

**The last day for payment is
20 February 2013**

**Please pay by this date to avoid
the 10% penalty.**

Further information about rates are included in "Part B" insert which accompanies this instalment.

Payment by direct credit is welcomed. Please help us to process these payments by including the property (RID) number for all properties you are paying.

Direct Debit Forms

We included with a previous Rates Notice a direct debit form hoping to encourage ratepayers to consider this method of rates payment, if not already signed up. Direct Debit is the cheapest way to pay your rates as we withdraw the funds directly from your bank account at the very last minute. That way you get the benefit of your funds for the longest possible time.

If you have not had the opportunity to do so but

would like to pay by Direct Debit please complete and return that form to us. If you have not kept the form we sent, just contact us by phone or email/post or drop in to one of our service centres to arrange to complete the required form.

We are very pleased with the response to our last notice about paying by Direct Debit with 200 additional ratepayers signed up. Our thanks to all those who pay by this method as administratively it is easier for us and means you not having to stress about paying on time.

GET IT SORTED

To South Wairarapa District Council, P.O. Box 6, Martinborough 5741

From:

Name

Surname

What's the Problem

Where Exactly?

Street, Road, Number