



July 2024



Walkers, runners and cyclists enjoy new trail

Walkers, runners and cyclists of all ages and stages can now enjoy a safe new 2.2 kilometre stretch of trail on Underhill Road in Featherston. The new trail was finished on 31 May and funded entirely by central government from the COVID-19 Infrastructure Investment Fund, administered by Kanoa.

"The South Wairarapa District Council is extremely appreciative of central government funding for this new 2.2 kilometre stretch of trail, which brings safety and enjoyment to the growing number of trail users in our district. We're grateful for the expertise of local contractors and volunteers to bring this trail to life," says James O'Connor, Manager of Community Operations.

The trail was constructed by Pope & Gray. It is hoped that this trail will eventually connect to a vast network of trails connecting the Wairarapa's five main towns.

Annual water allocation changes

Water is a precious resource. Currently, an average household in South Wairarapa uses about 150m³ of their 350m³ allocated water quota before additional charges kick in, which is \$1.84 per additional m³. Compared to other councils, our allocated quota is relatively high while our additional charges are relatively low.

Following consultation on our 2024-25 Enhanced Annual Plan, Council decided to reduce the yearly allocation to 250m³ with an excess charge of \$2.50 per additional m³. This came into effect on 1 July 2024. The benefit of this change is that people and businesses which use a lot of water will pay more of the costs of running the water supply systems and it will encourage more careful use of water.

How to check your water usage

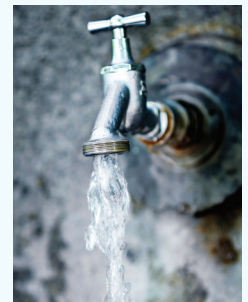
Council carries out yearly water meter reading for all properties connected to Council-owned water supplies. Excess water

charges are invoiced following the yearly reading, with funds put back into our water services. SWDC will soon inform households and businesses about their past four water meter readings when the information is available following the 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 yearly read. This will help you to track your water consumption so there are no surprises at the end of the year.

Your water usage depends on factors such as the number of people living in your household, how often you water the garden, if you have a swimming pool, run a business, or have a leak on your property.

Understanding and monitoring your water use has benefits for everyone. There are ways to check this by locating your water meter and keeping track of usage.

Find handy information on our website swdc.govt.nz/water-meters



Budget friendly emergency preparedness

How does your emergency preparation bag, box or cupboard look?

The Wellington Regional Emergency Management Office (WREMO) is focussing on budget friendly emergency preparation advice. This includes cleaning and reusing bottles and containers to store water; reusing clothes and other items for DIY Grab Bags; making homes quake safe by moving heavy or fragile items lower down, learning how to turn off electricity and gas and removing debris from gutters and drains.

WREMO's role is to help people keep safe in emergencies by getting prepared. This means making a plan with family and whānau, forging closer connections with neighbours, being familiar with MetService alerts and knowing where your nearest Community Emergency Hub is. Community Emergency Hubs are places where people connect and help each other in emergencies. Hubs in the South Wairarapa are at ANZAC Hall in Featherston, the Greytown Town Centre (aka the town hall) and the Waihinga Centre in Martinborough. Hub open days will be held later this year. Visit www.wremo.nz for more handy tips

03

Being prepared is knowing your neighbours

You can share resources and support each other in an emergency.

The illustration shows a group of diverse people, including a woman in a hijab, a man, and a child, standing in a room. One person is holding a tray, and another is pointing towards a table with a grill and food. The scene represents a community emergency hub where people can share resources and support each other.



Putting wellness into community

South Wairarapa District Council is putting the capital C in Community with a new Wellbeing Fund dedicated to foster positive change and enhance the quality of life for everyone in the district.

The new fund is allocated to projects that have a focus on making people feel safe, happier and healthier. Its core wellbeing outcomes are social, economic, environmental and cultural, which means that applicants need to show how their project will meet one or more of these.

Examples of wellbeing projects include school garden to table projects, community solar projects and green transport initiatives. Applications could also focus on waste reduction and recycling or environmental education projects, among many other wellbeing initiatives to benefit the community.

“We believe that by investing in initiatives that support social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing, we can create a vibrant, resilient and inclusive district where everyone has the opportunity to thrive,” says Janice Smith, Council Chief Executive.

The Community Wellbeing Fund has a pool of \$500,000 available. Application criteria is on the council website.

The funding was made available from Te Tari Taiwhenua, the Department of Internal Affairs, from the better off support packages that were provided to Local Authorities under the Three Waters Reform. Applications are open now and will be assessed on 24 July, 4 September and 27 November 2024 by a Community Wellbeing Fund Subcommittee, made up of councillors, the Chief Executive and representatives from the Community Boards and Māori Standing Committee.

The final deadline for applications to be received is 31 October 2024.

Find out more here swdc.govt.nz/cwbf

Signs of the times

Do you have a favourite sign in the South Wairarapa?

The council is upgrading worn out signs throughout the district and those working on the project are keen to hear about (and see) your most loved and least liked signs in the district.

The aim is to simplify, standardise and streamline signs for better readability and information. This is a long term project with benefits that will progressively be seen across South Wairarapa.

Is there a sign you love or loathe? Let us know via email:

signs@swdc.govt.nz

Square lights up

If Martinborough Square looks lighter and brighter at night, it's all thanks to the repair of the 17 new inground uplights which have been replaced with new fittings and are now fully functional.

“We are very happy to share the good news of the improved lighting in Martinborough Square, which is helping address safety concerns in the community. It's great to see the beauty of the majestic trees lit up in the square once again,” says James O'Connor, Manager, Community Operations.

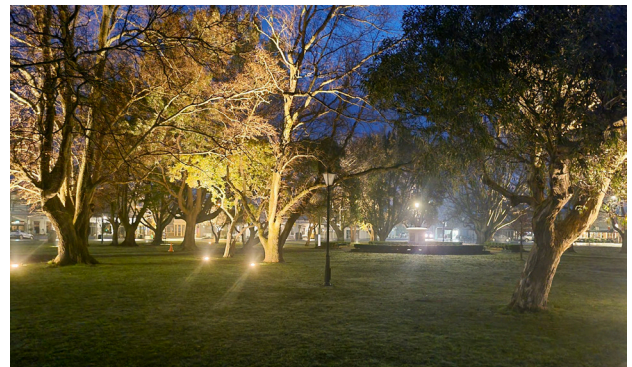
The repairs make walking in the dark safer while retaining full compliance with the Wairarapa Dark Sky Reserve Association (WDSRA) criteria. The kelvins of the new lights have been lowered to make sure they meet the Dark Sky regulations.

WDSRA is accredited as a dark sky reserve by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and exists to reduce light pollution and the adverse impacts it can have on humans and the environment.

“The WDSRA was consulted with throughout the uplight repair process to make sure we met their regulation requirements,” says O'Connor.

“The contractors were Cotter & Stevens, whose staff enjoyed being part of this project, which helps the community.”

The next repair will be the four upstanding lantern lights in the Martinborough Square. This work is anticipated to be completed over the winter period and is part of the council's ongoing work to increase safety in the square by improving the lighting.



Who are your unsung heroes?

Mayor Martin Connelly hosted a morning tea thank you to volunteers in South Wairarapa in June, paying tribute to their role in the community.

“Our district is too big and our ratepayer base too small for us to get everything done, unless we have volunteers. These people bring great value to the district and we wanted to give them something back with a morning tea,” says Mayor Martin Connelly.

June was Volunteering New Zealand’s Big Shout Out to volunteers nationwide. “We plan to build on this year’s event and show our gratitude to more volunteers in future years,” says Mayor Connelly.



Community notices

Scoop the poop

Dogs are part of the family for many of us and we want them to enjoy life, which is why the council has off leash parks with supplied bags for doggy do. Please remember to use supplied doggy do bags at dog parks and BYO doggy do bags to scoop their poop in public spaces.

Keep your canines safe

Dogs love walks and sometimes take themselves for one, which is why we recommend all dog owners to please close gates and

keep fences secure. We acknowledge that some dogs can jump fences and squeeze under gates and we want to reduce the risk of dogs wandering or being impounded. Speaking of which, we also want to take this opportunity to ask dog owners to please keep their dogs on leads in public spaces, particularly Considine Park, which is not an off-leash area.

Dog fees due now

Dog registrations are now due and we recommend you pay yours by 31 July to avoid a late fee. Dog registration covers the maintenance of animal shelter facilities for lost and stray dogs.

Pay your dog registration online at swdc.govt.nz/services/dogs



Email or snail mail?

How do you currently receive your rates?

Did you know you can receive rates invoices by email rather than snail mail? This can make it faster for you and reduce printing, postage and stationery costs to the council, which are, in turn, passed onto the community. Help us all to reduce valuable resources where we can.



If you would like to receive your rates by email, get in touch via rates@swdc.govt.nz

Rebates 2024-25

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$790.00 for low income earners. Ratepayers must have been living in the home they own on 1 July 2024.

1. Your rebate will be calculated based on your gross income from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, your rates, and the number of dependants you have. The income eligibility for a rebate is \$31,510 - \$42,000.
2. You must provide details of income from your income provider for ALL forms of income, including interest and dividends. If requested by the Department of Internal Affairs you must provide proof of this income. Application forms will be sent to those who have previously received a rebate in 2024-25. Copies of the form can be obtained from the Council office in Martinborough, Greytown and Featherston libraries, or online www.swdc.govt.nz/services/forms and can be obtained by calling 06 306 9611.

Having trouble paying your rates?

Please contact us as soon as possible so we can work with you on a payment plan. Council will make every effort to work with you on this process. As a last resort, Council policy is to approach banks and legal representatives to recover arrears.

For any queries regarding your rates, please contact our rates team at the following email address: rates@swdc.govt.nz

Automatic payment

At the start of each new rating year, if you are paying your rates by automatic payment, you may need to recalculate your payments for the new year's rates.

Please check your payments and adjust these if required. Your payments still need to clear the quarterly instalment by the due date to avoid penalties.

We are unable to recalculate automatic payments for you. To avoid any issues, you can switch to a direct debit where we calculate the payments right up to 30 June, not each quarter. No penalties are charged if paying by direct debit.

Rates 2024-25 Instalment One

1

Enclosed with this newsletter is the rates invoice covering the period 1 July 2024 - 30 September 2024.

The last day for payment is 20 August 2024. Please pay by this date to avoid the 10% penalty.

Please help us to process payments by ensuring you include the property valuation number for all properties you are paying for. If paying online please make a separate payment for each property.

Payment by direct debit

We encourage ratepayers to pay rates by direct debit as this ensures the correct amount is paid and you avoid late payment penalties.

We offer **weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly direct debit options to pay rates**. Direct debit is the easiest way to pay your rates as we withdraw the funds directly from your bank account at the last minute. That way you will get the benefit of your funds for the longest time and avoid penalties. If you would like to pay using this method, forms are available from Featherston and Greytown libraries, the Council office in Martinborough and online at www.swdc.govt.nz/services/forms. All you need to do is complete the form and send it to SWDC, PO Box 6, Martinborough 5741 or scan and email it to rates@swdc.govt.nz or drop it off at either the Council office in Martinborough or at Featherston or Greytown libraries.



**GET IT
SORTED**

Something needs fixing?
Let us know...

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

From:

First name

Surname

What's the problem?

Where exactly?

Street or Road name and number

Your phone number (Should we need to contact you to clarify the details)