

RANGITĪKEI LINE

Council Bulletin

COVID-19 – from response to recovery

As the immediate threat of COVID-19 reduces, Council's attention is increasingly focussed on recovery. The emphasis has been on understanding the position of the numerous businesses within the District - an extensive survey has been carried out and followed up by phone conversations with the Mayor. Council will soon be engaged in a local marketing campaign to attract visitors from Wellington. Rangitikei is one of four councils chosen for a pilot project to assist people displaced from their jobs by COVID-19 to get back into employment.

At its meeting on 28 May 2020, Council also agreed to an amendment to the current procurement policy which will allow a local price preference of 5% (or a maximum value of \$5,000) for purchases up to \$250,000. This will apply when a non-local business is part of a quotation or tender process.

2020/21 Annual Plan

At its meeting on 28 May 2020, Council considered the implications of new obligations arising during the past year. Most notable are the increased cost of annual depreciation (the result of a 30% increase in the value of roading, waste, wastewater and stormwater assets) and the need to remediate the old Putorino landfill, not used for over 30 years, but eroded by a change in direction of the Rangitikei River. The Mayor and several Councillors will study this financial position over the coming weeks in an effort to further lower the rates increase for 2020/21. Council currently expects to adopt the final Annual Plan on 25 June 2020.

Council and Committee meetings

During the past two months Council has continued to meet by using Zoom, because of the physical distancing requirements of the COVID-19 alerts. These meetings are live-streamed to Council's Facebook page - the meeting on 28 May 2020 attracted over 500 views. Once the country is at Alert Level 1, the schedule of meetings of Council committees, community boards, community committees, reserve management committees and rural water supply management subcommittees will be reactivated.

Consultation on a draft rates postponement policy

As one of the measures to ease the financial impact of COVID-19 (and the alert level responses), Council resolved, at its meeting on 28 May 2020, to consult on a draft rates postponement policy. When rates are postponed, payment is deferred without penalty but the whole rates will still be due. Council is proposing that postponement of rates will be available when Council defines an event as potentially resulting in financial hardship for ratepayers. In such

circumstances, postponement would be available to every current ratepayer who demonstrated financial hardship. An annual administrative fee would be charged during the period rates were postponed.

At the same time, Council is consulting on its current rates remission policy. (Remission or waiver of rates, may occur in certain defined circumstances.) The policy has been amended, most recently in December 2019, but Council is legally required periodically to consult on the whole policy. If, as a result of this consultation, Council decided to introduce further amendments to the policy, there would be further consultation on those.

Full details of the two policies and submission forms are available on Council's website, from the Marton Administration Office, from the Marton and Taihape libraries, or by phoning 0800 422 522 and asking for copies to be posted or emailed. Consultation closes on Monday 22 June 2020 (noon). Council will hear oral submissions on 25 June 2020.

Mangaweka Bridge

Council has agreed to the next stage in building a new bridge, confirming the decision taken by Manawātū District Council to appoint GHD as contract manager. It is a 'boundary bridge' so the costs are shared equally, by the two councils, together with co-investment by the New Zealand Transport Agency.

Progress is being made in working out the future of the current bridge, which is over 110 years old.

Marton water strategy

Council has agreed to a more detailed business case to consider the financial implications of changing the raw water source (currently two dams) and treatment process for the production of drinking water for Marton. This will include investigation of potential bore sites.

Hunternville town water

The bore funded by the Ministry of Health found water in sufficient quantity but of poor quality, which would require costly treatment. Council has decided to review how the Hunternville Rural Water Supply currently allocates between urban and rural users.

Bulls Community Centre

Construction on the site has started under Alert Level 2. Interior design is now close to a concept to be used for consultation.

District Plan Change – rural to industrial

The hearing for the District Plan Change will start on Wednesday 17 June 2020. It will be livestreamed to Council's Facebook page.



Driving across history

The Mangaweka Bridge has a new lease of life.

Concerns over the safety of the 115-year-old Mangaweka Bridge on Ruahine Road have been the subject of much debate in recent years. And now a solution has been reached which will see the bridge live on as a pedestrian and cycle facility while a new road bridge will be built a little further downstream.

The historic, single-lane Mangaweka Bridge, first opened in 1904 to serve the settlers farming in the Kauwhata Valley. It divides the Rangitikei and Manawātū Districts and is the only cantilever road bridge left in New Zealand.

Today it's a tourist icon, allowing visitors to Mangaweka to enjoy the breathtaking river views, papa cliffs and surrounding beauty. Awastone, a riverside haven for camping and rafting is located on both sides of the bridge. All these benefits will be maintained with its conversion to a foot and cycle way.

Providing a link as it does between Rangitikei and Manawātū Districts it is only natural that the bridge became a joint venture between the two Councils. A Management Plan has been written to manage the bridge into the future and to oversee the two-pronged project – the conversion of the old bridge and the building of the new road bridge.

Water is on the menu - Marton Dam

There's a song from The Byrds you may recall, You don't miss your water until your well runs dry! In the case of Marton's water supply, the well hasn't run dry but we have been managing the supply in recent months so that it doesn't.

Council lowered the levels at the dam last year, so as not to put too much pressure on the dam which was in need of repair. Then with the dry summer we have just come through, the water level fell even further, necessitating restrictions on water use for Marton. These restrictions were able to be removed at the beginning of May.

And along with the removal of water restrictions, work has been done on repairing the dam so that it can be restored to full capacity and a bountiful water supply into Marton homes can resume.

Work on the repair of the dam spillway was carried out by Rock Control Ltd, ground engineering specialists. The company started work in April and after completing the initial repairs, the contract was extended to repair the B dam, this subsequent work will take approximately 6 weeks.

"It's quite an undertaking," says Council's head of Infrastructure, Arno Benadie. "The contractors have to clear all vegetation from the spillway channel, drill through the spillway base slab, record depths of voids and pour grout under low pressure to fill the voids."

"This is a significant amount," explains Council CE, Peter Beggs. It is an indication of Council's intent to ensure the District's infrastructure delivers a quality level of service and meets the needs of our residents and ratepayers."



How did we do this year?

Help us, help you, by answering our survey...



www.rangitikei.govt.nz/howdidwedothisthisyear?

RANGITĪKEI DISTRICT COUNCIL
Annual Residents Survey 2020 | Closes 29 June 2020

