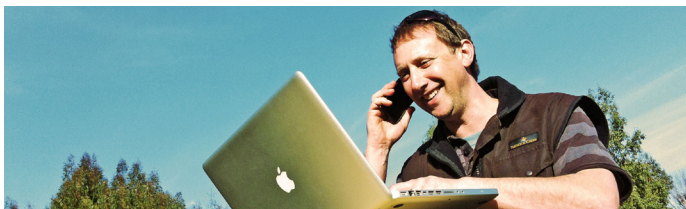
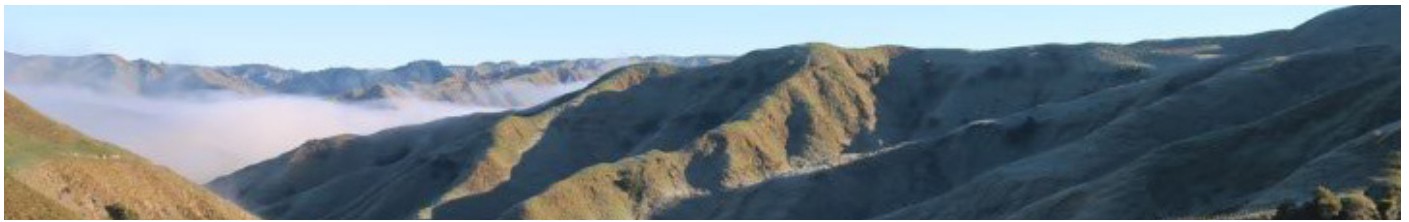


Hot Wire



Newsletter of the Wanganui Rural Community Board



Update from the Board Chair

Board Chair David (Tex) Matthews rounds up some of the achievements of the Wanganui Rural Community Board in recent years and what's coming up.

As part of the 2018 Community Views Survey, questions were asked to judge the awareness and the performance of the Wanganui Rural Community Board.

The results were worse than my School Cert results and that is saying something!

But I guess we don't run around and promote ourselves as much as we could, we just quietly achieve in the background. In saying that, this year we are focusing on better ways to tell the rural community about our achievements.

Rural broadband

There are now only five houses on the Parapara that cannot be connected to Inspirenet. Our achievement in this field was recognised at the 2013 New Zealand Community Boards Conference in Wanaka, where we picked up the supreme award for a Community Board working for their community.

Yet I still find there are people out in our rural community that are grizzling about broadband speed, who could be connected to Inspirenet. How many times do I have to tell this story? You can lead a horse to water, but...

For those who are interested in getting connected, visit www.inspire.net.nz or phone 800 484 363 and see what they may be able to do for you.

Read more about how the Rural Connectivity Group is getting more rural areas connected on page 4.

Rating for wastewater treatment plant

Another little achievement that might have gone unnoticed was how at last year's annual plan we managed to help influence the Council to axe the \$50 rate for those not able to connect to the wastewater treatment plant.

It was only \$50, but we all know that could easily turn into \$100 or \$200 with the stroke of a pen or a vote around the table.

Security cameras

We have a little bit of funding which means the Community Board is able to contribute \$500 towards installing rural cameras.

So far I have gone out to my local community to contribute to three cameras on the Parapara and one on Parihauhau Road. I have contributed my share by buying two poles for the cameras to go on at the value of around \$500.

I am getting good at digging 1.7m deep holes for the 8m poles! I am still working with the community on cameras for Raupiu Road and the top of Fields Track. Then one more somewhere in Pipiriki.

I thought that these cameras would be a bit like having a raincoat or a spare tyre – as long as you have got one you won't need it, but the Police have needed to access footage regularly to solve crimes.

For more information on the rural security fund, visit www.whanganui.govt.nz/funding



Board Chair Tex Matthews digs holes for security cameras poles

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment from my fellow Community Board members. They are a very good team to have around and be part of.

The same can be said of the staff that work with us at the Council. From Chief Executive Kym Fell at the top, to the lowest-ranking person we work with, I think that we are well spoilt by them and they seem to mother us Community Board 'cowboys' along. It makes my job a whole lot more pleasant and easier.

The Mayor and Councillors would be the best diverse balance of knowledge and experience I have seen in the 11 years that I have been on the Board.

As a Community Board we are very fortunate. While as the Board Chair I do not have voting rights around the Council table, I do have speaking rights and it is my job to convince the Mayor and Councillors that I am right. I don't always succeed but then that is politics. And as we all know, opinions are like bellybuttons, everyone's got one.

The Wanganui Rural Community board also has representatives who sit on each of the Council committees, where we have voting rights. We are one of the few, if not the only, Community Board in the country to have this. Read more about this from Cr Murray Cleveland in the next article.

There may not be a gender balance at the Community Board, but anyone, regardless of who they are, is welcome to stand in the October 2019 elections if they have the listening skills and 'get it done' attitude.



The Community Board helped influence the Whanganui District Council to get rid of the \$50 rate for people not connected to the new wastewater treatment plant

Board gets the vote

Cr Murray Cleveland, the Council representative on the Community Board, is pleased the rural voice has more clout because board members have been given voting rights at Council committees.



It has long been a concern of many Whanganui District Councillors that because of Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) rules, Wanganui Rural Community Board representatives are unable to vote at the Council.

It seems a little pointless that, after going to the trouble of electing your Rural Community Board, their views can be given on Council matters but they are unable to take the final step, which is to vote.

Your Community Board represents approximately 15% of our district's population and the members all contribute hugely, as they bring the rural viewpoint to town.

We are fortunate to have a range of backgrounds amongst Community Board members which spans from those living in our rural villages and lifestyle blocks, through to those that work full commercial farms.

We all face similar issues to those faced in the urban area, like roading, waste disposal, rubbish collection and water supply, albeit with slightly different detail.

The Community Board's contribution to Council planning is invaluable and helps mold our decisions and policies so they are the 'best fit for most'. But we have had a change.

Largely, thanks to an initiative from Mayor Hamish McDouall, in February 2017 individual members of the Community Board were appointed to various sub-committees of the Council and granted voting rights accordingly, still within the LGNZ rules.

The sub-committees are where the majority of issues are dealt with before making recommendations to the full Council for ratification, so this is where the votes count. From all accounts, Whanganui District Council may be the first, or one of only a few councils to make this move.

Your representatives have been appointed as follows:

Sandra Falkner	Property & Community Services
Grant Skilton	Strategy & Finance
Michael Dick	Infrastructure
David Wells & David Matthews	Tamaupoko Iwi Link
David (Tex) Matthews	Youth Committee & Full Council

Although appointed to these committees, this does not preclude any Community Board member from hearing any issues from the public and raising these with any other Council committee, so I would encourage you all to keep communicating with your reps.

I would like to thank all the Community Board for their input into our district. You help make Whanganui a better place.

Update on Forestry Roding Rate

Board Chair Tex Matthews on the progress of managing the effect of forestry on our district's roads.

In the Long Term Plan 2018-2028, the impact of forestry on our roads from trees planted back in the early 1990s was recognised.

This is a hot topic, not just here in our district but in other parts of the country. After the February 2004 rain event Horizons Regional Council was quick to point out that there was less erosion on forestry land compared to farmed hill country.

After the June 2015 rain event, when some of that forestry had been harvested then replanted, the new trees were still too young to hold the hills. As a result, the old tree roots had rotted out the hills which turned to porridge and the erosion was far worse than the clean farmed land.

The recent events at Tolaga Bay are another example of this.

A few years ago I did a comparison of what weight comes off and goes onto my farm, including fertiliser. Over a thirty-year period it came out to less than 10tonne/ha. Forestry on the same land would produce 500tonne/ha. I also asked three other farmers on the Parapara to do the same and the results were similar. Some of the better farms might produce more than 10tonne/ha, but better land might produce more than 500tonne/ha of forestry as well.

I asked farmers from the Mangamahu Valley to do the same calculations. This information was passed onto our roading engineers at the Council and is now used as an example by the Road Controlling Authorities of New Zealand.

At this year's Long Term Plan deliberations a motion was passed to charge foresters 1.5 times the normal roading rate. This is by far the most important battle the Wanganui Rural Community Board has won in the 11 years I have been here. Not getting this one over the line would have cost each rural ratepayer thousands. We only just got this motion over the line 7 to 6.

This is not unique to our Council, as other forestry-affected local authorities, like Ruapehu and Gisborne, are doing the same.

The roading rate is collected a third each from commercial,

residential, and farming ratepayers. Unless we have a climatic event like those of 2004 or 2015, the cost of maintaining our roads between urban and rural is roughly 50/50.

The current Funding Assisted Rate (FAR) set by NZTA is 61%, which means Whanganui District Council has to find the remaining 39%. NZTA's Funding Assistance Rate may also be used for any new works in our district for example, Wakefield Street Bridge and Wikitoria Road culvert, if they are approved.

Representation Review

If you live in the Kaitoke or Whanganui subdivisions, you may already know the Council is considering making minor changes to the boundary lines.

These changes would bring the Wanganui Rural Community Board closer in line with the 'population to elected member equality rule' of the Local Electoral Act which says that each elected member should represent about the same number of people.

The changes would provide more equal representation of Community Board members compared with the number of voters they represent.

At the moment, the Whanganui subdivision has too few people for the number of Wanganui Rural Community Board members it has and Kaitoke has too few Community Board members for the number of people living in the subdivision.

It is proposed that boundaries are adjusted so the Whanganui subdivision slightly expands into Kaitoke. This will affect approximately 65 households, who were sent a letter in June about the proposed changes. These suggested changes would also keep all settlements where there is a shared sense of community, for example, Fordell, intact.

The same number of Community Board Members would still be appointed for each subdivision and all members would continue to advocate for the entire rural community like it does now.

The change is proposed as part of the Whanganui District Council's Representation Review. All councils must undertake a representation review every six years and ask for public feedback.

It is also proposed to change the name of the Board from 'Wanganui Rural Community Board' to 'Whanganui Rural Community Board.'

Whanganui District Council's current representation by way of a Mayor and 12 councillors, is proposed to remain as is. The way councillors are currently elected, using the First Past the Post system, and 'at large' (without a ward system) is also proposed to remain.

Feedback from the Representation Review will gauge voter's feelings about the way councillors are currently elected with further opportunity available for people to have their say in a poll which will be sent out with the voting papers in October 2019.

To read the statement of proposal and give your feedback, please visit www.whanganui.govt.nz/haveyoursay

Submissions close on Friday, 3 August 2018.

More wide-reaching internet for our district

Board Member David Wells noticed a nearby farm in Mangamahu being scoped out for a possible cell-phone tower and found out more.



Six rural sites in the Whanganui District are being investigated as sites for high-speed broadband as part of the second stage of the Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI2).

The RBI2 and Mobile Black Spots programmes are government initiatives that involve regional wireless internet service providers such as Inspirenet in the Whanganui-Manawatu district,

and the Rural Connectivity Group, which is building a new rural mobile network.

RBI2 is likely to provide 74,000 households New Zealand-wide with high-speed broadband as well as cover mobile black spots on 32 rural state highways and provide connectivity at 100 tourist sites.

Spark, 2degrees and Vodafone have partnered to form the Rural Connectivity Group, an independent entity that will build, operate and maintain 450 new mobile towers in rural New Zealand. The new network will deliver high-speed broadband of 20 megabits per second and mobile services to support safety on state highways and to enhance visitor experience at key tourist destinations.

Rural Connectivity Group

A more connected rural New Zealand is coming...

The Rural Connectivity Group is proud to be partnering with Crown Infrastructure Partners to deliver the Rural Broadband Initiative (Phase 2) and Mobile Black Spot Programmes. We will be in Whanganui District over the next four years to bring better mobile phone and high-speed broadband services to remote rural users and ensure New Zealanders are connected both at home and at work. For more information visit www.thercg.nz

The Rural Connectivity Group is working with landowners in our district to find suitable locations for the mobile tower infrastructure. The project is scheduled to be completed by 2022 at a cost of \$225 million. Inspirenet has also been provided funding to upgrade its current broadband network of 20Mbps and will be working in the Whanganui and Manawatu area to provide this service.

The areas in the Whanganui District expected to have new broadband sites are Mangamahu, Fordell North, Upokongaro North with future extension to the programme proposed to cover Three Way Junction, Otoko and Kaiwhaiki.

Information about when coverage is likely to be available in these areas can be found on the National Broadband Map at <https://broadbandmap.nz>

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