



# Ōmārama Gazette

March 2024

## An Ōmārama icon celebrates 30 years

However, the project was a team effort with notable local volunteers helping bring it to completion.

Joe Mitchell, of Parkside Limestone Quarry, Oamaru, supplied the stone for the sculpture.

Tom Tamati selected the stone and contractor Kevin Grant, used his Hiab truck to bring the rocks used for the plinth from Shelton Downs Station and then placed them in the chosen position, prominently at the junction.

Bill said he then gently lifted the sculpture with strops and swung it across to rest on the plinth with the ram's somewhat haughty countenance turned toward the pub.

The rocks were chosen and placed to create a slope with the ram standing proudly at the highest point.

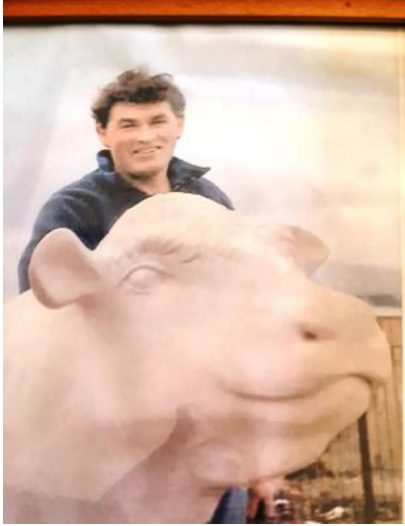
Apparently, no-one asked anyone for consent – do sheep need consent to do what they do?

Bill said it was hard to fathom just how much fame the statue had garnered, and it happened almost overnight.

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# An Ōmārama icon celebrates 30 years



It didn't make it to the newspapers at the time but very quickly photos "went global", he said.

It is used on promotional material throughout the district and beyond. It's even used for the Ōmārama Gazette logo - you're owed huge royalties, Bill!

If he had a dollar for everyone who has posed with the ram for a photo he'd be a rich man, he said.

It's been the regular New Year's Eve 'date' of many a youthful, and not so youthful, yokel.

Bill has recently had some health issues and was visiting Dunedin Hospital. When he told the nurse he was from Ōmārama he wondered if she would know where in the world that was. She turned and showed him a photo she had – three pink bottoms and the ram. That photo is now a screen saver he says with a cheeky grin.

Bill said he was often teased because the ram is not quite anatomically correct.

Well, yeah, taking a bit of artistic license and the fact there were three tons of stone sitting over his head, of course the legs had to be a little stumpy, Bill said. Okay, so what part of the anatomy were you ram breeders thinking of ?!

A labour of love, it was carved over two weeks – the hard graft meaning Bill lost all feeling in his arms.

Most people know Bill Adams as a builder but he also has a passion for the arts; drawing, photography and particularly sculpture. He studied fine arts at while at Waitaki Boys' High School– an intricate sketch of a boot found on the Otematata Rd, done in black biro for a school assignment hangs on the wall in his dining room.

His stone carving works – the ram at Berwen Station, a cattle beast for a birthday at Benmore Station, a Goldminer in Alexandra and a Blue Penguin in Oamaru are just a few that can be found throughout North Otago, and his workshop is filled with



Photos: (top) A young Bill Adams poses with another of his creations; (below) The iconic Omarama Merino Ram carved by Bill 30 years ago.

# Still searching for site for hub

Finding a suitable site to set up and potentially grow a commercial electric vehicle charging hub in Ōmārama is proving more challenging than first hoped.

But Jump Charging engineering and commercial manager Alex Watson hopes that the upcoming meeting with the Ahuriri Community Board and Residents' Association of Ōmārama committee will allow him to explain "face-to-face" the importance and benefits to establishing a hub in the town.

Jump Charging is a New Zealand-owned business working to expand the fast electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the country. In October, it was granted government funds to set up two rapid EV chargers in Ōmārama with plans for this to grow into a commercial transport hub.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority approved Jump Charging Ltd's application for \$295,500 to install two 150kW rapid chargers – with a capacity to charge four vehicles simultaneously - with a planned completion date of December 2023.

At present, there is only one 50kW charger at the Sutherland Road carpark and several Tesla-only chargers at Hot Tubs Ōmārama. Network Waitaki will add a second charger to its Sutherland Rd site on March 13.

The EECA identified Ōmārama as one of 25 specific locations on 14 major holiday journey routes where it wanted to add to the network of public EV charging sites before the 2023 peak holiday season. Jump Charging was required to report back about progress to the EECA, but there was flexibility. "[However,] it is taking longer than hoped," Mr Watson said.

The change of government would not affect this round of funding, he said.

Jump Charging has been in discussions with the council about a possible site since October last year. Initially it had looked at privately-owned land, Mr Watson said.

But negotiations to secure private land proved to be a "bridge too far".

Instead, focus has turned to a setting up a "combined hub" with Network Waitaki at the Sutherland Rd carpark. Network Waitaki's two sites were "pull-in parks" and Jump Charging would be able to service "all vehicles" offering charging capability for a wide range of vehicle types, including towing vehicles, vans, coaches and light commercial due to the inclusion of extra-long parks.

Mr Watson said he was well aware of concerns about congestion in the town centre. However, this was a solution which had "synergy", he said. This was not about losing carparks but the opposite. There would be an incentive for electric vehicles to use the out-of-the-way Sutherland Rd car park, effectively freeing up carparks in front of the shops for petrol car use. Those who stopped to charge their vehicles would frequent nearby businesses "and spend money".

Jump Charging would pay a lease to the council for the use of the car park, Mr Watson said. But other than helping the company find a suitable site the council was not otherwise involved.

Growing the site would depend on the uptake "- how quickly we grow, and if we can grow within the power supply". And there would be further discussion should the point of expansion be reached, he said.

For now, "we're focussed on the first step".

## *Still searching for site for hub - continued*

There was no onus on the company to consult with the community but it had made the decision to take that initiative, Mr Watson said.

Coming from a rural community he wanted to explain the benefits directly and have discussions face-to-face.

He had already met with the Community Board which had arranged the meeting with the Residents' Association committee.

Strategically, Ōmārama was a key site for a reliable EV hub where it was placed at the statehighway junction close to the Lindis Pass, he said.

Plus, the potential enhanced capacity would open up opportunities for locals and rural vehicle owners to transition to EV.

Looking at it holistically, EVs were not only good for the environment but also for health and, with the right vehicle, they were also more economical to run, he said.

For the build preference would be given to local contractors where possible.

At its February meeting the Residents' Association committee agreed to meet with Community Board members and Mr Watson and it agreed it "would be happy for further communication to take place on a non-committal and investigative basis".

The meeting will not be open to the public.



# We don't say goodbye

The place just won't be the same without them, but they are promising to return often. Ōmārama will always be their home away from home, Mike and Liz Komen say.

After many years living and working in town the couple officially moved to Oamaru shortly before Christmas. However, they are keeping their home in Ōmārama for what they plan to be regular visits.

Camping holidays with her parents, Isobel and John Wray, at Ahuriri Bridge before they bought their holiday home in Teal Cr in the 1970's was how Liz first came to know Ōmārama.

"I've always loved it, [Ōmārama] I hated going home.

Mr and Mrs Wray moved here permanently when they bought Country Crafts – now Merino Country Crafts - from the original owner Aileen Woods in the 1980s.

Mrs Wray sold the business after Liz's father died in 1993.

Liz and the girls - Lee, Donna, Vicky and Paula – moved to town in 1991 and built their home here in 1992 which was also when Liz took up the role of Kurow Medical Centre practice nurse and worked for Dr Jo Chambers.

Ōmārama was a good place to raise children for many reasons – schooling, sporting opportunities and community, she said.

Liz's career moves and volunteer work have always had a nursing focus.

Working her way from practice nurse through to rural nurse specialist and St John Prime nurse with sole charge responsibilities Liz's community involvement has also been tireless. She was one of the first cohort of eight to train as an Ōmārama fire service co-responder.

Mike, who grew up on a farm at Whataroa on the West Coast, was a former fire chief in that township "for many years", Liz said.

He's often in the background quietly supporting Liz in her work, keeping home fires burning and, through his various work roles, keeping things ticking over in the village too. If it wasn't for Mike's support, Liz said, she would not have mustered the motivation to finish her dissertation to complete her Masters of Nursing in Rural Primary Health.

Growing up living and farming remotely meant Mike had needed to be quite innovative, Liz said.

In Ōmārama he has worked for Whitestone Roding and latterly the Heritage Gateway Hotel as groundsman and handyman and he also lends a willing helping hand to anyone in the community who needs it, from fixing lawnmowers and washing machines, to sharing veggies from his prolific veggie patch,



## *We don't say goodbye - continued*

to coming to the rescue in IT emergencies.

Few people know that during the July 2022 flood event it was Mike who opened up the hotel to 60 to 70 camping ground evacuees, stepping up to manage the facility in the early hours until outside assistance arrived.

Liz was drawn to specialise in rural nursing after the relative isolation and distance from medical care plus stints at relieving for Dr Jo meant she was gradually granted more and more autonomy and her skills grew.

She effectively operated as a “prime nurse” before the role was invented.

As well as Ōmārama and Kurow Liz has worked in all of the five South Westland clinics, initially stationed in Whataroa, north of Franz Josef, which was a five-and-a-half-hour trip from Ōmārama and almost seven hours from Oamaru where her daughters were at boarding school.

The couple came back to live in Ōmārama in 2012 after several years travelling and living in various parts of New Zealand and overseas, including a stint in the Falkland Island in 2008 and 2009.

In 2020 Liz was recipient of a Waitaki District Council citizens award in recognition of almost three decades volunteering with the volunteer fire brigade on the rural fire team, as a first responder, and with Ōmārama Search and Rescue.

For Liz, work over recent years has involved being on duty and on-call 24 hours including weekends for seven day stints, at the small West Coast town of Hannah's Clearing, just south of Haast.

And her seven days off were spent here in Ōmārama which was when she stepped up as volunteer in all hours of the day and night.

She had her last day at work last month.

“It was quite sad saying hurray to everyone”, she said.

She sounded surprised so many, including all the St John volunteers she worked with, had signed the goodbye card.

In the end the constant travel had got tiring – it had become a four-and-a-half-hour trip from Oamaru to Haast, on what was a busy tourist route.

She officially resigned from the Oamaru Fire Brigade and Search and Rescue at the beginning of 2023.

Living in Oamaru will mean she is closer to her mum, who is now 91, and other family, plus it will give Mike wider job opportunities, she said.

Liz now has eight grandchildren – four in New Zealand and four in Australia.

She has not put her name down for any volunteer roles in Oamaru just yet – though she expects that day will come.

“I can't just sit and do nothing, I'd get bored”, she said.



# Happy 90th birthday, Marylou

Congratulation on your 90th birthday, Marylou, from all of us.

Last month, Ōmārama doyenne Marylou Blue celebrated her 90th birthday with family at her home, The Briars.

A slightly more low key celebration took place at the Age Concern afternoon tea around a chocolate cake baked for the occasion by friend and neighbour Michelle Kitchen.

Since moving to Ōhau Downs in 1956 as the late Don Blue's young bride Marylou has woven herself inextricably into the fabric of Ōmārama history.

She has recounted just some of her story to oral historians Lynley Eade\* and Eileen McMillan\*\*

She told Lynley she loved "back country" even as a young teacher and it was that which made her ask her father, stock agent Doug Willcocks, to find out if anyone on farm might need a hand.

It just so happened that the Wigleys at Glen Lyon Station needed help with the children during the holidays.

It was the summer of 1954 and that is when she first met Don, shoeing his horse.

The Blues raised five children on Ōhau Downs, John, Jennifer, Susan, Margaret and Maryanne.

The isolation – the first three years without a phone and only one vehicle, the farm truck - meant day-to-day life was not without its testing times.

They were "tough old days" but happy ones, she recounted.

Mail and groceries were delivered to the gate each Tuesday but on Fridays only came as far as Benmore Station (Clearburn)

She remembered sitting up in bed feeding the baby in the cold of freezing winters, "but we put up with it because it was the way it was".

Anyone raising babies and busy toddlers can relate to these next stories.

The old Ōhau Downs Station homestead had painted grey floors .

Marylou was using caustic solution to get the paint off the spare room floor when she said she left for a moment and when she came back she discovered two-year-old John had been into the caustic and he was vomiting.

With no phone and Don away in the truck she set off with baby Jenny in the pram and John in the front to walk to the telephone at Benmore Station – it was a mile just to the gate along a shingle drive and a further two miles to Benmore.

After making it half-way down the drive harsh reality hit home and she realised they would not make it in time to save John regardless so she made "probably one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make" and turned around and went back home. She said it was a harsh lesson about just how careful she needed to be.

"There was literally no help for miles".

Another time toddler John disappeared and after what seemed hours of worry and fruitless searching of water races, sheep dips and other hazards, and with thick mist closing in, she searched the homestead once again and, in a closed office used only for stores, she found "gloriously happy" John surrounded by sugar, cocoa and macaroni.

In 1990, Marylou and Don retired 'into 'town' and built 'The Briars' and the second garden she and Don created from scratch.

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# *Happy 90th birthday, Marylou - continued*

Always a keen gardener, when she arrived at Ōhau Downs as a young woman she had set to and tackled the area around the house, which had not been much lived in. It had a mud drive and cocksfoot grass as high as the window sill.

Marylou picked up a pair of sheep shears and on her hands and knees cut a 12ft to 15ft (about 4.5m) strip around the house and then longed for a push mower to keep the grass down. They had the drive shingled and fencing put in.

She dug out the poor soil and stones and barrowed it away, and Don brought in trailer loads of top soil for the new garden.

Finding plants which would thrive in the conditions proved difficult until her mother suggested she try species roses, and from then her lifelong passion for old roses began. Marylou got to know Otematata township head gardener Jim Mitchell who gave her a grounding in landscape design.

Resourcefulness, hard graft and the barrow were also key to developing The Briars. Reportedly, both Marylou and Don, carved out the large terraced garden with a crowbar, two picks, two shovels and two wheelbarrows.

Marylou set to turning the scrubby and rocky hillside into orderly dry stone walls and briar rose hedges – shelter for the emerging new garden.

For several years, this garden was registered with the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture New Zealand Gardens' Trust.

Friends say Marylou has always been an outstanding hostess creating legendary spreads for the regular visiting tours and groups.

In 1969 Marylou began running “homestead accommodation” at Ōhau Downs, what we would now call bed and breakfast – only this was full board, – morning and afternoon teas and lunches, often picnics.

She was one of the first in the area to open her home to paying guests, The business thrived capturing overseas travellers on the tourist route from Christchurch to Queenstown . She and Don continued to take guests when they moved to The Briars.

Marylou has always been heavily involved in our community, many times behind the scenes. She was Twizel's first commissioner of Girl Guides and many young women have fond memories of 'Brown Owl' and meeting with fellow brownies at the Community Den, in Ōmārama.

And when The Briars last opened to the public in October 2017 it was to raise funds for the Ōmārama Sports Courts.

## **References:**

\*Twizel Town and Around. Remembering the Dam Days and More, by Lynley Eade. Published 2012

\*\* Frugal country and Hard on the Boots, A History of the Lake Ohau Valley, by Eileen McMillan. Published 2012.

*Marylou enjoys birthday cake at last month's Age Concern coffee afternoon*





# Collie Dog Club stages successful trials

It was hot work for campaigners and dogs on the first day of the Ōmārama Dog Trial Club trials at the club grounds at Dalrachney Station.

The Met Service recorded 28C at its Tara Hills station at 2pm. The trials drew competitors and their dogs from all around the region for the two heading courses and the two hunting courses.

There will be second day of competition before the winners are known. It was the 109th club trial and the eighth trial held at the Dalrachney grounds with some new faces leading the team of volunteers who stage the event.

This year's president is Hadlee Knight, of Reda's Rugged Ridges Station and new secretary Elizabeth Bertenshaw, of Tara Hills Station, has taken over from Carla Hunter.

Carla and Andrea Aubrey are this year's catering convenors and liberating convenor is Angus Fraser. The trials are hosted by the Aubrey family and held on the grounds at Dalrachney Station and Dalrachney provide the half-bred ewe lambs and two-tooths for the competition.

Results not yet to hand.

Event I Long Pull, Judge John McDonald, Marshal Rick Aubrey

Event II Short Head, Judge Paul McCarthy, Marshal Ginger Anderson

Event III Zig Zag Hunt, Judge Henry Shield, Marshal Scott Hunter

Event IV Straight Hunt, Judge Guy Redfern, Marshal Angus Fraser

*Former Ōmārama Collie Dog Club secretary Carla Hunter was on barbecue duties at the club's trials last week as new secretary Liz Bertenshaw stepped up to take registrations.*



# Adventure park project still on the table

Despite pressure to slash council water and roading budgets because of ballooning costs and the unprecedented rate hikes needed to pay for those, indications are the proposed \$400,000 Adventure Park for Ōmārama is still on the table.

However, it appears plans to take more of the Alps to Ocean cycle trail off road - including the risky Quailburn Rd section which has been the scene of numerous accidents – are firmly on hold in the immediate future.

Documents put forward at last week's council meeting provided an early glimpse into what will be put forward for spending for the next three years as the council met to decide whether to defer the 2024/34 long Term Plan for 12 months and adopt an enhanced annual plan for the 2024/25 financial year.

The allocation of the \$225k Placemaking Better-off Funding in Ōmārama also came up for discussion as it was noted in chief executive Alex Parmley's report to the council's February 27 meeting. In the report, which Mr Parmley recommended councillors received and noted, it said that; "A parking trial, community amenities, and playground upgrades were prioritised [for the spending] in Omarama following community engagement.

"However, these are now being revisited with the community following some concerns about whether these should be the highest priorities for the whole community,' the report said.

Councillor Jim Hopkins queried what the word 'should' meant in that context.

"I would have thought it could mean or might indicate some kind of dispute within the community but who is assessing the hierarchy of value and merit implicit in the word 'should'? I don't quite understand that." Mr Parmley said he did not want to "dwell on one particular word and read too much into that".

"We sought to work within and engage with communities, and where there are organised community groups that has been a starting point," he said.

"I think in terms of Omarama, we were engaging with that group. We thought we'd got a prioritised list of projects that reflected some of the things in the masterplan and some of the community wishes as well.

"But it became apparent that not all of the community agreed with that, and so it's just a case of them re-looking at that and working through that to make sure that, whilst we're not going to be able to please everyone in every community, that we've got what we feel confident is a solid reflection of the community sentiment," he said.

Mr Parmley referred the discussion to Waitaki District Council mayor Gary Kircher and his recent meeting with Omarama residents. Mr Kircher said council staff had held "conversations with parts of the community" and out of that it was determined the priorities should be the three things mentioned above.

"Following a bit of angst in the community" Mr Kircher went to the meeting, called by Residents' Association chairperson Lindsay Purvis.

He said he was unaware it was a public meeting and thought it was to be a meeting with just the project working group. Economic development manager Mel Jones joined via video link.

"We went through quite a thorough grilling... around what the priorities should be. What the meeting determined was that the priorities should actually be the sports field and looking at the Rabbit Board land and what it might be used for," Mr Kircher said.

*[The meeting with the mayor included the Residents' Association committee and project working group members plus all those who had been present at the November 20 'informal' meeting between council staff and Residents' Association members. - Ed]*

“Since then, there’s been a bit of further confusion thrown in as to whether that [meeting] represents enough of the community view or not,” Mr Kircher said. “There were about 20 people at the meeting which seemed to be very one-sided.” Equally, he had heard since that maybe those priorities put forward at the meeting were also not representative.

“We have heard from some that maybe that wasn’t their priorities,” he said. “I’m leaving it to staff to get on and sort through that. But I think the main thing is that they need to have enough consensus around the community about what the projects should be and get on with it, otherwise time and resources would be spent “talking about it” and “not actually doing it,” Mr Kircher said.

## **Long-term plan deferred for a year**

Councils around the country have been meeting to decide whether to defer their Long-Term Plans – the budgets used to set spending (rates) each year for the next 10 years.

The deferral option was part of the Government’s repeal of water reforms earlier in February. It means the council won’t have to develop a Long-Term Plan in 2024 and then amend it in 2025 as a result of changing policies and legislation – saving in administration and cost to the ratepayer.

Instead, an “enhanced” annual plan will be developed to set rates, income and spending for 2024/25 and planning for Years 2 - 10 of the Long-Term Plan will be deferred for 12 months.

The decision report attached to the agenda – the Waitaki District Council’s Long-Term plan 2024-34 preliminary decisions report – which was adopted at the meeting gives an early glimpse into the council’s spending priorities for the next three years.

Draft financial details of projects council staff want to be included in the annual/long term plan, and the list of projects which would “not be progressed” were published along with the recommendations.

It is important to note these are proposals for spending only and the spreadsheet does not give a full account of where all the funds are sourced from.

Some projects had been approved by the council, chief financial officer Amanda Nicholls said.

But a lot were “placeholders and rounded off”. Planning was still in the early stages and they would come up for discussion later and also be consulted on in April.

At present staff were trying to work out what projects should be progressed and then work on options and analysis. “so figures aren’t hard and fast,” she said.

‘Business as usual’ budgets were not included in the paperwork.

On questioning by councillors it was stressed by staff that this enhanced annual plan budget had been stripped to the bare bones to make sure essential spending could be covered.

Water services manager Martin Pacey said budget was already “stripped right back...this is bare bones , this is minus 10%.”

“As a water professional this is the bare minimum. We think we can get away with it but there’s risks involved in this.

# *Adventure park project still on the table - continued*

“ I feel like I’m giving you bad advice suggesting we should do this. We should be doing more, he said.

However, the \$400K plus Adventure Playground for Ōmārama appears to be still very much on the table.

Items of note in the proposed projects list for Ōmārama, apart from water services, are:

- In 2025, it is proposed \$208,080 will be spent on an adventure playground in Omarama. An amount of \$226,414 is set aside for spending on the adventure playground the following year. In the years that follow until 2034, \$37K to \$39K is to be set aside for the playground annually.

- Staff continue to recommend \$1.7million be allocated to a ‘sports pitch’ for Omarama in 2031with \$88K allocated annually until 2034.

- an amount of just over \$7K is set aside annually from 2026 until 2034 for streetscaping;

- In the Economic Development group budget, \$106,200 of Better-off funding spend is tagged for Omarama for 2028 and \$108,100 is tagged for 2029.

In the list of projects not being progressed is work to take the A2O cycle trail off-road at Lake Ohau, Quailburn Rd, Benmore Dam to Loch Laird, and Otematata to Aviemore Dam because it says there is no funding available.

As well it is proposed the \$300K set aside for next year for Ōmārama stormwater network improvements be canned.

According to the paperwork it had been proposed to spend \$33K plus on “Ōmārama project requests” each year for the next three years but this has been “deleted” and instead it is recommended the Ahuriri Community Board “raise projects” through annual and long term plan submissions.

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**In a separate update from the Residents’ Association of Ōmārama February meeting** minutes, it was reported that the project team had met and discussed the order of potential projects to be put forward for Better-off Funding.

The first project is to be for seating in front of the new mural by the tennis courts and a landscaping sketch was presented.

Three quotes will be obtained for this work and submitted to the council for approval

The second project was to “tidy up” the existing playground with some new equipment. Some of these potential improvements could be done economically with the assistance of local residents, the minutes recorded.

The third project was the rejuvenation of the sports field.

“Whilst the committee acknowledges that this was one of the most popular items in the survey recently carried out. This is a project which will take time to bring to fruition and should be undertaken in stages to ensure that it is carried out in the most cost and time effective manner.

“This can be achieved by using other low-cost projects to lay some groundwork for the bigger picture.

“The committee is currently looking into irrigation possibilities and tree removal as initial steps,” its report said.

# Council responds to questions

The Waitaki District Council has moved to clarify circumstances and address criticism levelled at it about a lack of transparency in communicating with the community about Better-Off Funding and projects.

In its responses to questions put to it in January by the Omarama Gazette it has detailed who knew what about its proposals and when.

Last month, Residents' Association of Omarama chairperson Lindsay Purvis called a public meeting with Mayor Gary Kircher to "get some clarity" about the Better-off Funds tagged for Omarama – specifically about what portion of the \$225K allocated would be available to the Residents' Association to spend.

At that meeting Mr Purvis said council staff had lacked transparency and that the committee had felt "pushed into" discussions about building an adventure park which the council propose would go on the former sports field.

In December, the council, on the Ahuriri Community Board's recommendations, approved the priorities for spending which were put forward as an outcome of an informal meeting between council staff and some Residents' Association committee members, in November.

At the December meeting of the RAOI committee the Gazette was assured by the chairperson that neither he nor the committee had prior knowledge that topics other than playground projects or that staff other than the council placemaking lead, and parks and recreation staff would be attending the meeting, or that the outcomes would form part of a decision report to council.

This, and the fact council staff had been reluctant to outline a proposed budget for the \$225K spend was what prompted the Gazette's questions in January.

The council's Executive Leadership Team decided to deal with the questions by way of an official information request delaying the response for 20 working days until February 8.

In response to the request for a budget outline of council's planned dispersal of the \$225,000 of Better-off funding in Ōmārama, the council replied that; "No decision has yet been taken on how the Better-off Funding approved for Ōmārama will be allocated to specific projects."

It reiterated that reply when asked if any of the \$225K had been allocated to the improvement of footpaths.

It also confirmed no Better-off Funding had been spent on the new traffic/parking signage at the town centre carpark which went up just before Christmas.

*"Payment for the initial signage in the Ōmārama carpark was made from Roothing's Car Park Maintenance and Signage budget, at a cost of \$796.37 + GST.*

*"The Board and Council decisions in the report were about seeking approval to leverage a portion of Better-off Funding to proceed with a six-month parking improvement trial, not the initial installation of signage.*

*"The six-month trial will then help guide other options for a long-term solution on traffic congestion and parking," the council official information response said.*

The Gazette asked, who, in Ōmārama, was told that: in addition to discussing playground improvements, the three masterplan options would be discussed at the informal meeting in November; that council roading staff would also be present at the "informal meeting" to discuss proposed implementation of traffic management and

## *Council responds to questions - continued*

signage for the town centre, along with a six-month trial for parking improvements; where additional EV chargers might be installed, and the other topics that were introduced which were not relevant to playground improvements?

It also asked why the group attending that November 20 meeting were not told the information gathered on any of the topics discussed was to be presented as a “decision report” to the Board which was subsequently ratified by the council, and were not told that the meeting was a consultation exercise for drawing up the report.

The council replied that: *“It does not have details of who was told about the November 20 informal community meeting in Ōmārama, because it was organised and publicised by the Residents Association of Ōmārama Inc. They will have the details of the content of their public notice, when and where it was published, and to whom it was distributed. The informal community meeting was convened by the RAOI Chair. Any discussion topics were at his discretion to raise or not to mention.*

*“On the other hand, the decision report was drafted as a separate activity by officers and was focused on seeking the relevant approval from council for the use of Better-off Funding in Ōmārama through a recommendation from the Ahuriri Community Board. Council staff did not tell anyone at the 20 November informal community meeting that it was a consultation exercise for the decision report because it was not a Council-organised meeting. The RAOI Chair organised the meeting and wrote the contents of his chairman’s report.”*

The Gazette asked why EV charging stations and the placement of Jump Charging Ltd’s proposed hub was discussed at this meeting when it is neither part of any of the Masterplan options nor a playground project, and those businesses affected by this decision were not present at the meeting?

*“The EV charging stations was a discussion topic that the RAOI Chair put forward; he will have more details about why it was included. Council Roding staff were invited to the informal community meeting by the RAOI and answered questions there as they were raised by the RAOI Chair. Council roading staff were invited to the meeting for the informal discussion. The Ratepayers Association raised questions to council roading staff during the roundtable discussion on the Jump Charging EV Charger topic... this information was not used in any further decisions or processes related to their request.”*

The Gazette asked; given that the November gathering was an “informal meeting” according to the council officer’s report, and using the same definition the council uses of ‘informal meeting’ – no decisions can be made – and as per the definitions of the ROAI’s constitution - why was the feedback from this group of 11, who met informally – characterised as decisions of the ROAI in the report to the Board and council?

The council’s reply; *“We do not believe that the officer report characterises any content as decisions of the RAOI. The summary of the report discusses the projects that the survey respondents prioritised back in August 2023; and stated that the “community-led project team has now been established to help move agreed projects from the Masterplan forward (with “agreed” being a reference to the projects that were agreed and approved in the Masterplan when it was first developed back in 2020)”.*

*“There is also a reference to: “The options in the Masterplan were discussed further [at the 20 November 2023 informal community meeting] and an action plan that could help facilitate progression of opportunities with them was outlined. Each option will*

*be costed for budget approval.”*

The Gazette asked: How can the Ahuriri Community Board recommend the council ratify this decision report when the RAOI has not discussed or voted on any of these topics at any formal committee meeting?

The council said; *“The RAOI has its own constitution and the right to run its meetings in accordance with that and as directed by its Chair. The ACB recommendation to council was in relation to the use of the Better-off funding which followed local government decision-making processes.”*

The council said the final agenda papers for the December 5 Ahuriri Community Board meeting were published to elected members (including board member Mike King) and on council’s website early on 1 December, 2023.

The Gazette asked; given the Ahuriri Community Board and the council has handed delegated authority to the Chief Executive and given there were only 11 ratepayers present at the ‘informal meeting’ in November, what recourse do the remaining Ōmārama rate/taxpayers – estimated to be between 280 and 300 – have if they wish to challenge decisions, and how and why these public monies have been allocated to specific projects, and the reasons why some projects might be prioritised over others .

The council’s answer: *“The allocation of Better-off Funding to certain areas within the Waitaki district has been determined by the criteria set for it by central government. That criteria included using an existing strategy document (in Omarama’s case, that was the Masterplan which council had previously approved and was in place) to help identify possible community projects (as listed in the Masterplan) AND could meet the criteria to be allocated from the Better-off Funding. As noted above, no individual allocation of funding has yet been made to specific projects in Ōmārama. The RAOI Chair’s public notice of the 20 November informal community meeting would have provided an invitation to all Ōmārama rate/taxpayers to attend to contribute to the discussion there. If they were not able to attend the meeting and now want to share their views, it is suggested that they correspond directly with the Residents’ Association of Ōmārama. It is unclear from the question what the subject of an appeal would be. The Better-Off Funding has been allocated to Ōmārama in the amount of \$225,000 via a Council resolution and that is a legal decision, which can only be amended or reversed by Council itself. If the other rate/taxpayers of Ōmārama wish to appeal / challenge the Residents’ Association of Ōmārama contributions or process that they have followed to date, then we would recommend communicating with them directly as a first step. “Petitions can be presented to the local authority or community board, as long as the subject matter falls within the terms of reference of the intended meeting. There are specific conditions that must be met for petitions, and they are covered under section 17 of Council’s Standing Orders which are available on our website (at the bottom of the “Mayor and Councillors” page).”*

The Gazette also asked for a copy of the presentation made by Economic Development staff to the Ahuriri Community Board workshop in Otematata in October to which the Residents Association of Ōmārama chairman was invited. This was the week prior to the council’s public ‘Community Conversations’ meeting at the Ōmārama Hall at Labour weekend.

A copy of the presentation is available from the Omarama Gazette. - *continued over*  
The presentation was not repeated at the community conversations meeting, nor has it been presented to any public meeting since.

# *Council responds to questions - continued*

It has not been a part of any agenda papers nor was it presented at last month's meeting with Mr Kircher and Ms Jones.

The copy was provided noting names had been redacted ...as well as outdated figures that have been updated in subsequently published documents.

*"As a further note, we highlight that this presentation contains what might be considered 'decision words'. These were not related to discussions and outcomes of this workshop. Rather, they relate to earlier Council officer discussion on existing scheduled projects, initiatives and programmes for Ōmārama, as well as any available funding from various teams across council that had been budgeted for Ōmārama /Ahuriri Ward."*

The October 19 presentation detailed the three options the council proposed to address through Better-off Funding and its Long Term/Annual Plan, and the Ahuriri Community Board's budgeted spending. The first option identified an adventure park with the former sports field as the proposed site, plus; "Community-led design and development. Potential opportunity to leverage local employer Numat in playground design process."

The second option put forward was to enhance the Sutherland Rd carpark and increase EV charging capacity and option three was to develop a cycle pedestrian thoroughfare from SH8 behind the Boots and Jandals Hotel carpark to SH83.

The community was first told about these three options by Mr Kircher only at the last month's meeting.

The presentation also included a budget which used the available budget in the Annual and Long-term plan projections, and a proposed "Funding and Budget by Project Option" – which gives a proposed breakdown and an estimated timeline for developing the options. This was information the Residents' Association playground project team and committee had been seeking since its first meeting with council staff about Better-off Funding in July.

On February 13, the Ōmārama Gazette emailed this information to the Residents' Association chairman and offered him the opportunity to comment on the council's official information response.

This council's official information response was not shared with the RAOI committee at its February 15 meeting.

On February 21, the chairman told the Gazette he did not wish to reply publicly, preferring that the Ōmārama Gazette "let this line of enquiry rest" and that it not seek to question the council further.

*Right: The graphic presented by council staff to the Ahuriri Community Board and RAOI chairperson on October 19, indicating areas for developing a "community hub" including an adventure park. The full presentation is available from the Omarama Gazette.*



# Clydesdales make summer visit to town

Some special holiday makers called into the pub for a beer on a hot February afternoon. About 20 people in Clydesdale-drawn wagons and on horseback pulled into town at the end of their summer holiday trek. The group led by Clydesdale enthusiasts Colin Drummond, of Erewhon Station, and Hugh Ensor, of Rangiora, had five days enjoying what has become an annual trek around the Ōmārama high country following traditional trails. Enthusiasts had come from the North Island, Nelson and Dunedin to take part, Hugh said. "It's our holiday. Once a year we head away with the horses." It was a way to promote the working horse breed. This trek began at Huxley Gorge Station at the head of Lake Ōhau and then headed to Lake Ōhau Lodge, across to Ribbonwood and Ben Avon and then Birdwood Station. The final stop was Boots & Jandals Hotel Ōmārama for lunch and a beer before heading home today – tired but happy after a great week, he said. "All the communities make us welcome." But most importantly, the trek would not be possible without the support of all of the landowners along the way, who not only generously provided grazing but also accommodated the support vehicles. The group like to follow the old trails where once wool was carted or other similar work was done, and keep those traditions alive along with enjoying "a fun holiday". Hugh said. *Photo: Neville Kitchen*



## 3 locations identified for activation Ōmārama masterplan- Option 1

Location	Community Hall & Playground activation
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mural - funded</li> <li>Halfcourt/basketball - funded</li> <li>Shading and seating</li> <li>Trickle charge (other sites to be reviewed)</li> <li>Natural playground</li> <li>Adventure park</li> </ul>
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancement projects underway and funding secured( mural/halfcourt)</li> <li>Additional activation will increase usage &amp; appeal to youth and families and reinforce its importance as a key gathering place/hub for the community</li> </ul>



Community Hub area

# The Noticeboard

To have your community notice included here  
email: [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com)

**Many happy returns for last month** to Ōmārama's favourite mailman Lex Perriam  
**And to March's birthday girl** Shona Smith.

**A fond farewell to Michaela Kennedy** who has moved to Dunedin. We know you'll be back for lots of visits but we're missing that smile already, especially when the siren goes!

**And we're really going to miss you guys, Vaughan, Aimee and Riley.** You've become part of who we are, from your adventure into cycle tourism, and bringing a funding boost to St Thomas's Church, to pitching in wherever and whenever help is needed. Aimee has been Plunket coordinator and playgroup volunteer and Vaughan recently completed his two-day medical co-response course in Dunedin as a volunteer firefighter. Go well, knowing this will always be your home away from home.

## **Planned power outage**

**Network Waitaki has a planned power shutdown for Sutherland Road and Chain Hills Highway between 8.30am and 3.30pm on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, for the new connection of EV Chargers.**

**Please treat all wires as LIVE - power supply could be restored at any time. For any enquiries please call us on 03 433 0065.**

**!! The library will be closed Wednesday, March 13, 2024 because of the Network Waitaki power outage!!**

**Congratulations to Gareth McKerchar** who was announced as the Aorangi FMG Young Farmer of the Year after two days of, in Kurow, last month.

**Kurow Medical Centre Ōmārama Clinic** at the Ōmārama Community Centre, is open Thursdays, 8.30am to 12.30pm. To make appointments for all clinics, order repeat scripts or make enquiries please contact Kurow Medical Centre 03 436 0760 (Monday to Thursdays). [www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](http://www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)

**The Ōmārama Community Library** is open 9.30am to 11am, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Library hours can change. Contact Yvonne: 027 476 7473.

**Ōmārama MenzShed** meets each Saturday at 10am and at other times too. For further information please contact Malcolm Cameron 022 476 2225

## **St Thomas' Ōmārama Church Community:**

Rev Lee Kearon, phone: 021 250 1060 or email: [lee.kearon@gmail.com](mailto:lee.kearon@gmail.com)

**The Ōmārama Golf Club** Saturdays cards in 12.30pm, tee-off 1pm.

Club captain: Greg Stuart 027 438 9018, secretary: Arron Chambers 027 203 2340. Twilight golf on Thursdays, tee-off 5pm to 5.15 pm. Nine hole stableford run through summer. Come along for some fun and laughter. Contact is Greg Stuart 027 438 9018. [www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz](http://www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz)

**The Ahuriri Community Catchment Group** meets once a month. For time and place contact facilitator Bridget Pringle, 021 072 2113 or [bridget@irricon.co.nz](mailto:bridget@irricon.co.nz)

**The Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club** meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month at the 'Top Pub' - the Blue and Gold pub, in Kurow. All welcome. Join the Facebook group.

**Ōmārama Playgroup** meets at 9.30am each Wednesday during the primary school term at the Ōmārama Community Centre. For more information phone president Nic Mc Kerchar 022 612 7570 [rn.mckerchar@hotmail.com](mailto:rn.mckerchar@hotmail.com) or secretary Olivia Black, 027 833 0869.

**Bridge Club** - The Ōmārama Bridge Club meets on a regular basis and would welcome new members. If you are interested please phone Sylvia Anderson 438 9784 or Ann Patterson 438 9493.

**The Ōmārama Model Aircraft Club** meets on Saturdays from 9.00 am to 12.00 noon at its flying ground at the Ōmārama airfield. All welcome - Contact Don Selbie on 027 435 5516.

**FENZ Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade** meets 7pm each Wednesday and has its meeting at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month. New members welcome.

**A gentle exercises and social afternoon group** meets at the Otematata District Club at 1.30pm Thursday afternoons. Gold coin donation and a cuppa after the exercises. The exercises are run with the guidance of personal trainer Lauren Maree. Gold coin donation and a cuppa after the exercises. Contact Ethel Gray 03 438 7764.

**Waitaki Newcomers Network:** For more information about this group send contact details to E: [waitaki@newcomers.co.nz](mailto:waitaki@newcomers.co.nz) W: [www.newcomers.co.nz](http://www.newcomers.co.nz) F: [facebook.com/WaitakiNewcomersNetwork/](https://facebook.com/WaitakiNewcomersNetwork/)

To read more, enjoy more photos and watch our place 'come to life' check out our Facebook page and website.

[www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/](http://www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/)  
[omaramagazette.nz](http://omaramagazette.nz)

To receive email alerts between monthly editions of the Omarama Gazette sign up to our 'Local List'. Email [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com)

Thank you to all who share your stories  
and contribute in other ways to the Gazette.  
We all really appreciate what you do.

**The April Issue of the Omarama Gazette  
is Wednesday, April 3, 2024.**

Please submit copy  
by Thursday, March 29, 2024

# The Community Reports

## Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade



*By Vicky Chambers*

Thankfully, February was a little quieter than January on the “siren” front with seven calls; three motor vehicle accidents, one vegetation fire, three medical.

As always, a big thanks to our team for their efforts and willingness to attend calls. One of our call outs involved chemicals and this gave the team an opportunity to test their skills in this area. The fire in Twizel saw the return of Jacob to the team, albeit briefly, as he was passing and made himself available. Thanks Jacob. Arron was picked up on the way as he was at the canals trying to catch

fish! So all in all, it was a bit of “collect as we go” event.

Our focus areas for March are wildfire prevention and escape planning. With the recent number of vegetation fires in the news both these topics are important, particularly in the instance of the Port Hills fire in Christchurch, where residents were evacuated from their homes. You might have seen our social media posts on extreme fire danger days when the temperature is hot, the humidity is low, and the winds are strong. Remember that everything is very dry at the moment, and we are currently in a total fire ban, so please be vigilant when undertaking activities that could cause a fire.

Congratulations to Vaughan on completing his two-day medical co-response course in Dunedin over the weekend. All our firefighters have medical training to assist our First Responders at calls, or until an ambulance is available. This important step is a pre-requisite for Vaughan to attend his seven-day recruit course at the end of April! We thank our employers who support the Brigade by making it possible for them to attend calls when they can.

You can follow us on Facebook (Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade) to see what we have been up to.

We practice every Wednesday at 7.00 pm and if you think you would like to join our team then give one of us a call and we will bring you along.

**Fenz Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets 7pm each Wednesday and has its meeting at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month. New members are welcome.**

**Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade chief fire officer  
Greg Harper, 021 293 1171**

# Ōmārama Golf Club

## OMARAMA GOLF CLUB

30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

### EASTER TOURNAMENT

#### Stableford Prizes

Report time: 12.30 p.m. Tee Off 1.00 p.m.

\$45 Per person Entry

All Welcome

Self-Contained Campervan Friendly

- Great Prizes
- Cash Bar
- Raffles
- Meal after Event
- BBQ on course during play

**Entries to be received by Thursday 28th March**  
[SECRETARY@OMARAMAGOLFCLUB.CO.NZ](mailto:SECRETARY@OMARAMAGOLFCLUB.CO.NZ) or  
Text Arron Chambers 0272032340

# Ōmārama School

*By principal Alison Holden,*

## **Connecting with our community**

Ōmārama School is looking for people to visit and share our learning with and to connect with people who may need some assistance with small chores or tasks. We are also hoping to invite people into school, who would like to share a skill with our students. This may be sharing knitting skills, cooking skills, woodwork, changing a tyre or similar.

Finally we are hoping some businesses in our local community would be happy to have a small group of students visit for 30 minutes to learn about running a business. Please contact the school if you can put us in touch with

- Someone who may enjoy a visit
- Someone who may need some support
- A business that may like to share work ethic with students
- Someone with a skill that would be prepared to share with students

We are hoping to engage in this initiative during terms 2 and 3.

## **Leadership Camp**

Last week our senior Leadership Team of Year 7 and Year 8 students travelled to Peel Forest Outdoor Education Centre for their Leadership camp. Students were challenged on the first day at the high ropes course at Geraldine High School.

Students overcame their initial fears and all managed to conquer the high rope bridge and took on other high rope challenges. It was amazing to see how far the students came in a little over three hours, they challenged themselves, supported and encouraged their peers to keep going.

Day two involved using orienteering skills to locate points on a topographical map, alongside team building activities, this day developed communication, listening and applying problem solving skills.

Students had to learn from their mistakes, question why they made mistakes and what they could do differently to achieve a common goal.

The last day was spent rafting on the Rangitata River. We headed out on two rafts into the rapids. This was about listening to instructions, working together as a team and having as much fun as we could. Our guides were fabulous. They were very supportive and encouraging of our students and pushed them outside their comfort zones. This was an exhausting day but the smiles and laughter of students showed it was a really memorable experience for them.

Thank you to parents and members of the Ōmārama Community that supported the students efforts with fundraising so they could have this incredible experience.

## **New Entrants**

Our junior classroom is quickly growing this year as we welcome a couple of five year old students this term and another couple to start early in Term 2.

We are also welcoming any 4 year olds in the area to visit Ōmārama School on a Wednesday afternoon for an afternoon of discovery.

This will get underway in Term 2.

## School Swimming:

This week Ōmārama School held a swimming display for parents and whanau to come and view.

The younger students shared water confidence activities and were supported in the pool by our teacher aid, who is also a swimming instructor.

The older students competed in Breaststroke, Backstroke, Butterfly and Freestyle heats. This was followed by a medley for our more confident swimmers and then a whanau freestyle relay. We concluded our display with a fun relay race between students and teachers.

A great day was had by all and we thank our parent community for supporting this event.

*Alison, Clair, Bailey, Kay and Ange*

## Ōmārama School contact details

Phone: 03 438 9815

[principal@omarama.school.nz](mailto:principal@omarama.school.nz)

[office@omarama.school.nz](mailto:office@omarama.school.nz)





**NZ LANDCARE TRUST**  
**NGĀ MATAPOPORE WHENUA**

*NZ Landcare Trust invites you to a town hall meeting to discuss the opportunities for a catchment group in your area.*

## **IT'S TIME TO START A CATCHMENT GROUP**

### **What is a catchment group?**

Catchment groups are a group of local farmers, landowners and community members who share an interest in working together to take action toward a shared goal.

This vision is based on preserving/improving/understanding parts of our environment (e.g. biodiversity goals, water quality, maintaining special features) and supporting a thriving community.

### **Who is NZ Landcare Trust?**

NZ Landcare Trust has been around for over 27 years. We are one of the only national, pan-sector, non-government organisations working with the land user community to encourage and support sustainable land and water management. We have a practical, community-based approach and support farmers and communities.

### **How can I get involved?**

We invite anyone interested in becoming involved in a catchment group to a meeting in your area:

**Twizel Events  
Centre Community  
Meeting Room**

**Thursday 14 March,  
12:30pm – 3pm  
(Light refreshments  
12:30pm – 1pm Start)**

**RSVP to  
[tracey.perkins@landcare.org.nz](mailto:tracey.perkins@landcare.org.nz)**



# Boots and Jandals Hotel Social Club

## SPUD IN A BUCKET 2024 -THE DAY OF RECKONING!

Sooner or later judgment day comes to us all – even to the humble spud. And last month came the day of reckoning in this year's Boots and Jandals Hotel Omarama Social Club Spud-in-a bucket competition.

The evidence was unearthed by honorary judge Laurie Ruddenklau and adjudicator Ross Kelman before completely objective???, witnesses and the harvest was judiciously counted and recorded by scrutineer Philip Jannink to reveal this year's winners.

Last spring, entrants were given a seed potato and bucket and sent forth to multiply, so to speak. A difficult and dry growing season meant the overall yield seemed smaller although this year's joint winners – with Carolynne Grant upholding the family tradition and newcomer Kelly Cadogan making her name in the hall of fame - matched last year's final tally of 19 potatoes.

Little Ben Station placed strongly for the third year in a row, this year taking out the junior prizes. All in all, another fun day in the sun which concluded with a meal and spuds on the side.

With thanks to all who volunteered to make it another best-day-of-the-year event.

### **Boots & Jandals Hotel Omarama Social Club Spud-in-a bucket competition 2024 Results:**

First Equal: Carolynne Grant and Kelly Cadogan with 19 potatoes

Second: Billy Geary

Third: Tracy Young

Biggest potato: Pat Wingy Leopold

Fewest potatoes, with zero to harvest, Linda Cumming

Best quality overall: Ross Kelman

Children's section

First: Toni Hales

Second: Maddie McCabe



# Ōmārama Community Library

There has been an exciting addition to the Memory Care Collection at Ōmārama Community Library.

The Rotary Club of Oamaru have generously donated five music players, one for each of the Waitaki District community libraries and Ōmārama is the first to receive theirs.

The easy to operate music player adds to the collection of resources designed around those with and those caring for people with dementia - items are free for them or their family and carers to borrow.

The 'Simple Music Player' has been designed to be as easy as possible to operate by someone with dementia or dexterity issues.

The MP3 player, which is set up by a friend or carer, is designed like a music box and looks like a radio.

The player is plugged into the computer and there are easy to follow instructions about how to load a playlist and set the volume.

To start playing music just lift the lid of the box, to skip a song press the big button and to stop the music close the lid.

Also now included in the collection and free to give away are colourful and fun twiddle muffs donated by crafty community volunteers. A twiddle muff provides a source of visual, tactile and sensory stimulation and keeps hands snug and warm at the same time.

The Memory Care Collection includes items such as books, jigsaw puzzles and memory kit bags.

The memory kit bags contain a themed selection of objects chosen to help stimulate the senses and promote joy, reminiscing and discussion.

**The library will be closed  
Wednesday, March 13, 2024  
because of the Network Waitaki power outage**

The Ōmārama Community Library  
is open 9.30am to 11am,  
Wednesdays and Saturdays,  
at the Ōmārama Community Centre.  
[omaramalibrary@gmail.com](mailto:omaramalibrary@gmail.com)

**Contact: Yvonne 027 476 7473**

# Ōmārama Residents' Association

The next meeting of the  
Ōmārama Residents' Association is  
7pm, Thursday February 15, 2024  
at the Ōmārama Community Centre

## Contacts:

**Lindsay Purvis, chairperson, 027 438 9630**

**Vicky Chambers, secretary, 021 296 5782**

(Minutes of the previous meetings are available from Vicky)

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## **THE ASSOCIATION HAS ITS OWN POST OFFICE BOX**

Could all those who want to contact the association by mail,  
send accounts to be paid,  
or have correspondence considered at the monthly meetings  
ensure it is addressed to:

**The Secretary, P O Box 93, Ōmārama 9448.**

**The association's email address is [omarama.committee@gmail.com](mailto:omarama.committee@gmail.com)**

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## ŌMĀRAMA COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL HIRE

To make a booking for an upcoming event or for more  
information about hall hire and availability  
please contact Michelle Kitchen 027 280 5446  
or email [hallhire.omarama@xtra.co.nz](mailto:hallhire.omarama@xtra.co.nz)



# Ōmārama MenzShed

The Ōmārama MenzShed meets  
at 10am each Saturday  
and at other times, too.

**For further information contact:  
Malcolm Cameron 022 476 2225**

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# Ōmārama Playgroup

Ōmārama Playgroup meets at 9.30am each Wednesday  
during the primary school term at the Ōmārama Community Centre.

**For more information contact:**

president Nic McKerchar, 022 612 7570, [rn.mckerchar@hotmail.com](mailto:rn.mckerchar@hotmail.com)  
or secretary Olivia Black, 027 833 0869.

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# Ōmārama Community Garden

We are a group of gardeners who work together to create something  
for everyone in our community

Anyone is welcome to pop along to the Community Centre and enjoy

Join the Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/742877880594146>

**Contact Heather Smith, 027 330 0249**

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# Ōmārama Golf Club

**Saturday Club Day, cards in 12.30 noon, tee-off 1pm.**

**Twilight golf on Thursdays, tee-off 5pm to 5.15 pm.** Nine hole  
stableford run through summer. Come along for some fun and laughter.  
Contact is Greg Stuart 027 438 9018.

**Club captain:** Greg Stuart 027 438 9018 **Secretary:** Arron  
Chambers 027 203 2340

email [secretary@omaramagolfclub.co.nz](mailto:secretary@omaramagolfclub.co.nz) [www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz](http://www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz)

# Care in the community

## Ōmārama Community Care Group

If you are in need of any assistance please do not hesitate to contact Ruth Grundy 021 294 8002 and we can work together on options and put you in contact with those who can help or for whatever will best suit you.

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## Twizel Community Care Centre

If you need any of the services listed below please contact:

Twizel Community Care Centre

Mount Cook St, Twizel, Phone: 03 435 0687

Open: Monday - Friday 9am to 2pm

- A reminder we have a food bank available with no questions asked. With the lead up to Christmas, it can be a particularly difficult time for people so please call in to the Twizel Community Care Centre on Mt Cook Street if you are in need of food.
- Our contact details are 03 4350687 and email [admin@twizelcare.co.nz](mailto:admin@twizelcare.co.nz) if you would like to arrange a convenient time to collect a parcel.
- Twizel-Tekapo Community Car bookings – this is a community car that picks you up from your house and takes you wherever you need to go such as town here in Twizel or Timaru for an appointment, whatever you need. There is a cost involved depending on destinations.
- Work and Income – assistance with applying for benefits, helping with queries regarding superannuation, and any other financial assistance you may receive. Printing and scanning of documents.
- Inland Revenue – queries regarding anything IRD related, access to forms.
- Home Delivered Meals – We have small roasts for \$10, Regular meals for \$8 and small snack meals for \$4. We can deliver to your home.
- Printing/scanning services
- Assistance with finding jobs in the area.
- Foodbank – donations, and supply people with food parcels when in need
- Any other government services – ACC, Department of Corrections, etc
- Arowhenua Whanau services – Free health clinic on the first Wednesday of each month.
- Computer/cellphone assistance – needing help with something on your computer or cellphone. Free WiFi
- Rat tests/Mask supply free of charge
- Assistance with filling in any forms or paperwork.
- Offer room hire to community groups and businesses.

# Age Concern in Ōmārama

The next Pop Up Café is  
1pm to 3pm, Tuesday, March 12  
Coffee afternoons are on the second Tuesday of each month  
at the Ōmārama Community Centre.

Kathryn Bennett is the coordinator for Age Concern Waitaki, based in Oamaru.  
Kathryn's contact details are: 03 434 7008, 027 4347 089  
NthOtago@ageconcernotago.co.nz  
Hours: Mon-Wed 9- 4.30pm / Thur- Fri 9-12.30pm



**UPPER WAITAKI YOUNG FARMERS**

**BARK UP!**

**\$25 ENTRY FEE.**

**OPEN DOG**  
**OPEN BITCH**  
**UNDER 1**  
**TEAM OF 3**  
**HUMAN BARK**

**SATURDAY 9TH MARCH**  
**KUROW HOTEL**  
**FIRST BARK 7PM**

**GREAT PRIZES UP FOR GRABS!**

Photography from Chloe Lodge. Dancing to the Southern Man.

'The Community Reports' is  
dedicated to news  
from clubs, groups and sports teams.

Contributions are welcome.  
omaramagazette@gmail.com



# Pop Up Café

**Let's chat about the good times, let's chat about the better times.**

**Meet you at the newest cafe in town and let's chat about what makes the world go round.**

**Celebrating together where we are in life.**

**Meet you at our "Pop Up Cafe" where real life stores begin!**

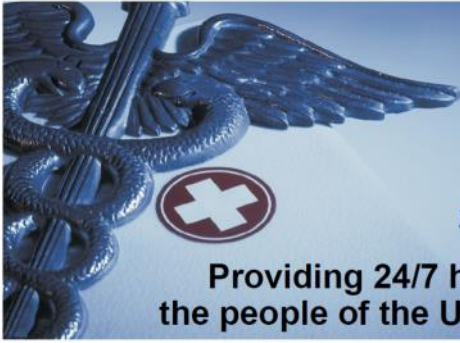
**Let's not grow old, let's grow awesome together".**

**Join us!**



**Tuesday 12th March 1pm to 3pm  
Omarama Community Centre**





## Kurow Medical Centre

8 Wynyard St, Kurow  
P: 03 4360760 F: 03 4360780

E: [info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](mailto:info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)  
W: [www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](http://www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)  
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**Providing 24/7 health care and support to  
the people of the Upper Waitaki and Mackenzie**

### **Kurow Medical Centre and its satellite clinics in Twizel (Mackenzie Health Centre Private Clinic) and Omarama (Community Hall)**

**are proud to offer our registered and casual patients the following services**

- \* Ultrasound performed by a qualified clinician (great for minor fractures, gall stones, kidney stones, heart and lung problems, foreign bodies, blood clots, detecting early pregnancy and much more!)
- \* Minor surgery \* Vasectomies
- \* Mole checking and removal
- \* Steroid injections
- \* Venesection
- \* Aviation, workplace and driving medicals
- \* Botox for Wrinkle reduction
- \* Workplace health screening
- \* Counselling
- \* Spirometry to diagnose asthma and COPD
- \* Hearing and sight tests for adults and children
- \* Ear syringing
- \* Liquid nitrogen for warts, verruca's and skin lesions
- \* Cardiovascular risk assessment and diabetic checks (funded for eligible patients)
- \* Travel advice and vaccination
- \* Cervical smears (funded for eligible patients)
- \* Seasonal flu shots and shingles vaccine (funded for eligible patients)
- \* Childhood immunisation
- \* Before school checks
- \* Postnatal and six-week baby health check

**And much more!**

**GP consult fees: Under 14yrs Free; Adult \$45.00  
Care Plus – Free to eligible patients only**

We also offer the following services from external Health Care Providers:

- \* Podiatry and Ear Health (Kurow only)
- \* Physiotherapy, Acupuncture and Massage (Kurow and Twizel)

#### **Opening hours**

Kurow: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday mornings 8.30am to 1pm

Omarama: Thursday 8.30am to 12.30pm

Twizel: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8.30 to 5pm and Saturday 9am to 12pm

Please note: We provide 24/7 on call after hours cover by our doctors and PRIME nurses for all our registered and casual patients!

**If you require further information or an appointment, please contact us on:  
For Kurow 03 436 0760 or for Twizel 03 976 0503**

*-Dr Tim and Juliet Gardner*

*Look us up on our website or Facebook page for more information*



# Wellness matters

*A health column from the Kurow Medical/Mackenzie Health Centre Team  
- By Fiona Chamberlain*

## **Flu Vaccines**

The change of season is here as we feel the temperatures dropping and see the leaves changing.

Influenza (flu) is a common viral illness. Most cases occur during the winter months: May to October in New Zealand. It is easily spread to others through talking, coughing and sneezing. People are at risk of repeatedly catching influenza because the virus types or strains are constantly changing.

Most people who develop influenza will recover, but some cases can lead to serious complications or even death. People who are highest risk of influenza complications include the very young, those aged over 65 years, those with weakened immune systems and women who are pregnant - however serious complications can occur at any age.

Getting the influenza vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your whānau against the flu and influenza can be much worse than a common cold. The sooner you get the jab, the better. It can take up to two weeks after you get the vaccine for your body to start protecting you.

Some key points to remember... We recommend vaccination to help stop the spread of influenza around your community. Even if you don't feel sick, you could still be infected with influenza and pass it on to others.

While it is possible to catch influenza after your vaccination, symptoms are less likely to be severe if you had a flu vaccine.

If you are sick, it is still important to stay away from others, wash your hands, and cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.

During pregnancy the vaccine helps protect both mother and baby, during the first few months of life.

You can't catch the flu from the vaccine and it doesn't contain any live influenza virus. Having side effects after your jab is a sign that your body's immune system is working well. You might experience pain, itching, redness at the vaccination site, aches and pains, fever and feeling generally unwell and tired. Most side effects shouldn't last long.

The vaccine is free for those who are most vulnerable to becoming very sick if they get the flu including those;

65 years old and over

with long-term conditions (like asthma, diabetes or cardiovascular disease)

with reduced immune function

who are pregnant

with specific mental health conditions or addiction issues

under 4 years of age who have been hospitalised for respiratory illness or have a history of significant respiratory illness.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, the flu vaccine is available for a fee. It is expected to be available at the beginning of April.

The [immunise.health.nz](https://immunise.health.nz) website provides information and answers frequently asked questions about influenza and the vaccine.

# Apply now for Meridian's Power Up Community Fund

At Meridian, we only generate from 100% renewable resources: wind, water, and sun. We're committed to doing good things with our energy. That means good for people, and good for the environment.

We're proud to back local projects in the communities around our wind farms and hydro stations with our Power Up fund.

With Power Up, your community has a say on what initiatives we support and fund. Managed by a panel of locals and Meridian staff, we're working together to build strong, sustainable communities.

Power Up Waitaki provides grants for projects in Aoraki/ Mount Cook, Twizel, Omarama, Otematata, Kurow, Hakataramea, Dunroon, Ikawai, Papakaio, Glenavy.

## How to apply

Applications for the next funding round are open until midnight on 21 April 2024.

For more information and to apply:

- visit [meridian.co.nz/pu-waitaki](http://meridian.co.nz/pu-waitaki)
- email [community.fund@meridianenergy.co.nz](mailto:community.fund@meridianenergy.co.nz)
- call 03 357 9732

Do you know of a community project that's working to reduce carbon emissions? Visit [meridian.co.nz](http://meridian.co.nz) and search "Decarb fund" for more information.



## Reporting issues is a snap with our Snap Send Solve App

Did you know Waitaki District Council has a FREE smart phone app to help make reporting issues easy? If you spot a pothole on a local road, damage to a footpath, a water leak or any other issue that you think Council may be able to sort, then you can use this clever app to report it by taking a photo (SNAP) and sending (SEND) it to the Council (SOLVE).

The app works by identifying the location of where the photo is taken using your phone's GPS data. You can fill in a few details then hit send. A report is then allocated to the relevant Council department. *Find more info and a link to the app on our website.*



**Waitaki**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
TE KAUNIHĀRA Ā ROHE O WAITAKI

[www.waitaki.govt.nz](http://www.waitaki.govt.nz)

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**[ecan.govt.nz/loveourlakes](http://ecan.govt.nz/loveourlakes)**

*Brought to you by the Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee.*



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Omarama

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**Vicky Munro**  
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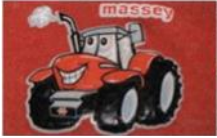


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Karan MacDiarmid

027 517 7959

[karan@mcre.co.nz](mailto:karan@mcre.co.nz)

Jess Mackay

027 902 5529

[karan@mcre.co.nz](mailto:karan@mcre.co.nz)

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0800 RURAL HELP (0800 787 254)

# The weather that was @ 44°29'30.1"S 169°58'20.3"E

## February 2024

Highest temperature: February 23, 29.1C

Lowest temperature: February 11, 2C

Most rainfall: February 24, 3.6mm

Total rainfall for February: 9.1mm

## The Ōmārama Gazette

Ōmārama's news delivered to your inbox  
the first Wednesday of each month

To subscribe email:

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