



Ōmārama Gazette

October 2026

Ōmārama Airfield partnership questioned

The future direction of the Ōmārama Airfield was up for discussion at last month's council meeting, with one councillor openly questioning whether the council is still the "right partner" for the company that runs the facility.

Up for discussion was the council's draft letter of expectation for the company and the company's statement of intent.

Airfield company chairman Clive Geddes was there to present the statement and answer questions.

Ahuriri Ward Councillor Brent Cowles said to his mind the company's latest statement of intent lacked ambition.

He also suggested the council might perhaps consider alternative ownership models, including private equity.

-continued over

The future direction of the Ōmārama Airfield has been the topic of recent discussions at Waitaki District Council meetings.



Ōmārama Airfield partnership questioned - continued

“Are we the right partner? Are there models that we can look at with the airfield? Would private equity do it better?” he said.

Cr Cowles’ comments came during a wide-ranging discussion about the airfield’s finances, governance, and long-term viability. Cr Cowles said the company had stabilised after the Covid years but he had hoped to see it present a more “aspirational” direction.

Waihemo Ward Councillor Frans Schlack agreed a discussion should take place “including what Brent has just brought up with the Ōmārama. “I think it’s worthwhile this council to actually think a bit more, discuss a bit more, debate a bit more...”

The council also signalled it wants to see a dividend returned from the airfield — something the company states it did not intend to do this year.

Oamaru Ward Councillor Sven Thelning, who is also secretary of the North Otago Aero Club, said he wanted to see the airfield “returning a dividend” but warned the council should not “kill the golden goose” as it considers future expectations.

Cr Thelning questioned whether the company’s recent purchase of two tow planes would generate a return for shareholders.

Mr Geddes said tow charges had been set to cover the aircraft purchase price, engine replacement reserves, and any debt taken on to refinance the council’s loan. He told councillors that meaningful dividends would not come from day-to-day operations.

“We can’t make significant amounts of money out of our cash-in, cash-out business,” he said.

“The only way we can generate significant dividends is through land sales.”

He said the directors’ goal was to become debt free and allow land sales to continue at a steady pace without triggering large provisional tax payments that could require further borrowing.

Once the council’s loan was cleared, the company intended to sell one more lot, get all the debt cleared, and then hold the remaining lots for future staged sales, he said.

Lease reviews and questions about communication

In discussion, Mr Geddes revealed the Ōmārama Soaring Centre’s lease of the camping ground had not been reviewed since 2003.

He said a recent revaluation of the two-hectare lease would likely increase rent “by a factor of 30 or 35” over the current \$1,000 per year.

The new rate will take effect once the valuation is filed.

He confirmed all non-aviation fees and charges were under review, including the café and the chalets, and that hangar leases renewed in 2023 would be reassessed again in 2028, with an expected “significant uplift” in non-aviation revenue. Cr Cowles welcomed the changes, saying they pointed to a more commercial approach. “It would be nice ... to be able to get it sitting on its own even keel,” he said.

Several councillors raised concerns about past governance issues, including the company’s non-repayment of the loan. Corriedale Ward Councillor John McCone said he would like to see the council’s letter “beefed up a wee bit”. “These guys went against what was part of our agreed system. So, where’s the rod for something that they’re not adhering to as a partnership? And you know, if you’re going to have a playing field, keep it level.”

Mayor Mel Tavendale agreed the relationship needed work. She said the council’s letter of expectation — approved at the meeting — included a message that some of the ways the company had interacted with the council had “not been in the depth that we’d like”. The letter does let the company know: “We do want to have you in front of us. We want things done slightly differently. “There is a conversation there, too, about maximising their benefit to us as the shareholders,” she said.

A more stable outlook after Covid

Mr Geddes said the airfield's commercial environment had finally stabilised after years of uncertainty.

Covid had caused "a lot of instability" among leaseholders and operators, he said, but the airfield was now seeing renewed investment in equipment, gliders, and staff.

"There's a much better culture on the airfield than I have seen in 20-odd years.

Everybody is understanding what a great facility it is and how it needs to be valued and looked after," he said.

The council voted to receive the airfield company's statement of intent for 2026–27.

At the close of the meeting Mrs Tavendale said she and Mr Parmley would be meeting with Mr Geddes at the end of that week for "a bit of a chat on how things are going".

Clarification sought

This morning the Ōmārama Gazette put these questions to the mayor and council chief executive Alex Parmley via email.

* Could you please confirm how many shares the council owns in the Airfield Company – changes were mooted in October 2023, and it is stated it is no longer a Council Controlled Organisation.

* Is there pressure on the council to sell its shares in the airfield company?

* Is the council contemplating selling its shares in the company?

A reply was not received before publication. However, the story will be updated once that information comes to hand.

UPDATE: October 8, 2026. In reply;

"Q. Could you please confirm how many shares the council owns in the Airfield Company

A. The council holds 209,353 (50%) shares in Ōmārama Airfield Ltd.

Q. Is there pressure on the council to sell its shares in the airfield company?

A. No, we are not aware of any pressure to sell

Q. Is the council contemplating selling its shares in the company?

A. No, there are not currently any plans to do this"

Company ownership

The Ōmārama Airfield has been jointly owned by owned by the Waitaki District Council and the Ōmārama Soaring Centre Ltd with each party owning 50% of the shares and neither party holding a controlling interest.

In October 2023 changes were mooted to release the company from Council Controlled Organisation status to help reduce auditing costs required by the Local Government Act.

Loan repayment

In June, a council decision about whether to renegotiate its loan to the Ōmārama Airfield Company which was due to be repaid in May was held behind closed doors the reason given to "enable council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)".

This was reported in the July issue of the Ōmārama Gazette.

The loan was to have been repaid from the sale of properties in the airfield owned subdivision. However, sales have been notably slow. The subdivision was developed so sales would build capital.

What the council's commercial strategy says.

In August, the council adopted a commercial strategy.

There are multiple references to the Omarama Airfield Company exploring joint ventures and partnership opportunities as well as new tenants, intimating that this is already underway. But there is little other detail.

(The partnership is described in some places as an equity-accounted 50% joint venture and in others as a council controlled organisation)

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Ann Patterson 027 201 2312

A day for fun and the future

Spring cleaning season is about to get a whole lot more fun.

The Ōmārama Residents' Association will host a Market Day and Car Boot Sale on Labour Weekend Sunday at 10am and organisers say the event comes with extra purpose.

The day will launch fundraising for the planned St Thomas's Care Centre extension to the Ōmārama Memorial Hall, a community-led project to create more flexible space.

The fundraiser will build on the seed funding granted from the sale of St Thomas's Church. The seed funding came with the proviso the association use it to honour the legacy of those who originally built and gifted the Church.

There will be stalls, treasures, bargains, baking and a good dose of Ōmārama neighbourliness.

Sites and indoor tables are \$20, with a \$10 rate for children, and bookings are recommended. Indoor tables are limited and demand has been steady.

"Please bring cash" is the message from organisers.

A community table will be set up inside the hall, and residents are welcome to donate goods to be sold there. All proceeds from this table will go directly to the extension project.

Background

The Market Day marks the first public fundraising push for the hall extension, which the Residents' Association formally adopted as its top priority last year.

Committee member Ann Patterson is leading the project, supported by a subcommittee working under the association's constitution.

The extension — effectively Stage II of the original 2011 Community Centre rebuild — is proposed as a multi-functional space that can host small confidential meetings, counselling sessions, or open out for larger gatherings. It will also include a clearly marked area for sanctuary and contemplation, reflecting the intent of those who built St Thomas's Church in 1986.

The project begins with about \$118,000 in seed funding vested in the association by the Presbyterian Synod of Otago and Southland and its Otago Foundation Trust Board.

The funds come from the \$750,000 sale of St Thomas's Church in 2023, with legal restraints requiring the money be used for a project "similar in intent" to the original gift.

A prospectus is being developed to take to external funders, and organisers say community input will guide the association's next steps.

Organisers say the Market Day is a chance to support the project and perhaps begin a new Labour Weekend tradition.

Fundraising coordinator Glenys Dawson can be contacted on 027 611 8880 for bookings or questions.

The bank account number to make a donation to the project is 06-0927-0054362-02. Please put St Thomas's Care Centre or STCC as your reference.

Mackenzie's solutions could be Ōmārama's headache

The Mackenzie District Council has warned Waitaki that its wide-spread introduction of paid toilets could have unintended consequences for Ōmārama.

Waitaki Mayor Mel Tavendale told the Ahuriri Community Board at its meeting on Monday she had been alerted by Mackenzie that its rollout of paid toilets across the district would have the unintended consequences of shifting its tourism infrastructure issues – with rubbish, toilets and traffic - south down the shared State Highway 8 to Ōmārama. “We need to plan for it,” Mrs Tavendale said.

The board was discussing topics for consideration in its upcoming Long term Plan.

“Our biggest issue is tourism and how we manage this,” board chairman Cal Reid said.

Calum Reid said while it would not have quite the same impact on Ōtemātātā and Kurow.

“It will come down the valley.” Waitaki District Council toilets are district -wide funded from rates. The situation was starting to return to Pre-covid 19 times, Mr Reid said. That was the reason why Mackenzie was raising it, Mrs Tavendale said. “We are sharing the same issues.” Board member Mike King said his workplace, Trail Journeys, was seeing increased numbers travelling down SH83 from SH8 to Oamaru see the penguins.

Mr Reid said what was needed was joint councils spearheading an approach to Government for funding to tackle the issues. Mrs Tavendale said smaller councils struggled to get the same government help and advice that Queenstown Lakes District Council did, for example. She said there were conversations being had at regional level to try to bring Government Ministers into Otago, possibly holding an Otago Expo to raise awareness.

Waitaki council Strategy and Commissioning lead Mandy McIntosh said the council needed to plan for how to tackle the issues and the LTP was the starting point.

“We need to know, what does the increase in tourism numbers do to this ward?,” she said.

On Monday, Mackenzie District mayor Scott Aronsen issued a statement defending the move to make more of its public toilet network user-pays. Fundamentally it was about fairness and sustainability, he said. While visitors were important to the district it had a small ratepayer base.

“The infrastructure they use has to be provided, cleaned, maintained and ultimately replaced by somebody,” he said.

“Our public toilet network is now being used approximately 900,000 to one million times each year. The overwhelming majority of that demand is visitor related.

“It is not simply a matter of supplying toilet paper and having somebody clean the building. Each use means water being supplied, toilets being flushed, wastewater being collected and treated, handwashing water being provided, electricity being used, rubbish being removed and the building, plumbing, pumps, sewer connections and other infrastructure gradually wearing out.

“When toilet usage increases, the number of flushes increases with it. That means greater demand on both our drinking-water infrastructure and our wastewater infrastructure. Pumps operate, treatment systems process the additional wastewater, pipes and equipment require maintenance, and eventually assets have to be renewed or replaced.”

Looking at construction costs did not tell the full story, he said. The Government had helped with construction but the ratepayers were left with the ongoing costs.

Mr Aronsen said the Government had acknowledged the unusual pressure tourism places on the Mackenzie. In July 2026, \$2.5 million of International Visitor Levy funding was announced to support improvements to public toilet infrastructure in the district, including these opportunities to introduce user-pays systems at appropriate locations, he said.

Statistics published last month revealing a sharp increase in visitor numbers to the Waitaki backed up claims. It showed visitors spent \$146.5 million in Waitaki, the district covering Oamaru, Waitaki Valley and Ōmārama, in the year ending June 2026, an increase of 15.8 per cent on the previous year. That compared with national visitor spend growth of 4.6 per cent. Waitaki ranked second among the 31 Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) areas nationwide for spend growth, behind only Auckland, and first in the South Island.

Santa is coming... so are the signs

Ōmārama may be in line for an early Christmas present from the Waitaki District Council — the long-awaited new town entrance signs are on their way.

A reader spotted the signs under manufacture at Acucut Oamaru, and the Ōmārama Gazette understands they are due to be installed before Christmas.

But wait, there's more

There are also signs footpath maintenance in the main street may soon get attention. However, council staff appear to have little appetite to resolve the long-running issue of Ōmārama's undersized rubbish bins — a problem now flicked back to them by the Ahuriri Community Board for the fourth time in just over 12 months, this time under urgency as the tourism season ramps up.

The topics were discussed at two meetings in recent weeks — the Assets and Infrastructure Committee meeting last month and the Ahuriri Community Board meeting on Monday.

Ahuriri Ward Councillor Brent Cowles was an apology for both meetings.

The reports, for discussion only, were prepared by council network manager Erik van der Spek. Mr van der Spek also met separately with the board in a non-public session, chairperson Calum Reid said on Monday.

Footpaths

In his report on footpaths, Mr van der Spek says the council has allocated \$90,000 for districtwide footpath maintenance in 2026/27 and refers only briefly to Township Amenity funds.

The Ōmārama Amenity Fund — used for footpath and stormwater maintenance — stands at \$167,298 for the 2026/27 year.

The report notes the district has 183.263 km of footpaths.

Asphalt renewal costs vary depending on location, scale and site complexity.

"As an indication, costs generally range from \$60 to \$150 per square metre. The 2025 renewal of [asphalt] footpaths in Walbrook Crescent cost \$102.93 per square metre," the report says.

The renewal programme has not received NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi co-funding for the past three years and must be funded entirely by ratepayers.

Following its condition survey, of the \$90,000 available the council has allocated \$70,000 for maintenance and \$20,000 to respond to urgent safety issues – throughout the Waitaki.

Plans for footpath repairs on main street

During discussion at the Assets and Infrastructure Committee meeting, Mayor Mel Tavendale questioned Mr van der Spek about the Ōmārama situation — in particular the disconnect between the council's condition scoring and actual experience, and how work was coordinated to be efficient and cost-effective.

Mrs Tavendale acknowledged the "very public feedback" from Ōmārama.



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Mr van der Spek said when contractors were already on site it made sense to complete as much work as possible.

“The problem then is you may end up doing some moderate fixes to the detriment of other parts of the district. So, it’s always going to be a bit of a balancing act.”

“In terms of Ōmārama we are looking at the main streets in terms of fault repairs.”

Mrs Tavendale asked what the expected time frame might be.

“We’re currently getting prices from a couple of different contractors to do some repairs on the main street, but I can’t commit to time frames just yet,” Mr van der Spek said.

“So, it is in the works essentially. Great news,” Mrs Tavendale said.

Overflowing Rubbish Bins

For the third meeting in a row this year — and more than a year since Board member Mike King first raised the issue in July last year — a decision on how to resolve Ōmārama’s overflowing rubbish bins has again been deferred.

At the conclusion of Monday’s discussion, Mr Reid once again moved that a list of solutions compiled by staff be brought to the board as soon as possible because tourism numbers were about to escalate.

“We need something in place now,” he said.

Costs and consequences

In his report, Mr van der Spek said the bins could be emptied more frequently and paid for from the board’s discretionary fund.

“Every additional empty is \$20/bin/day — approximately an additional \$3,024 per month over winter for daily servicing.”

Mr King said the problem was ongoing.

“We are still getting overflow,” he said.

School holidays had added pressure and visitor numbers had remained steady.

“We’ve got to do something, we need bigger rubbish bins.”

Mr Reid said in his opinion five or six 1m³ bins could be put in place during holiday periods.

There was a cost, he said, but there was also a cost to not doing it.

He acknowledged much of the rubbish was brought in by visitors. “But how do you stop it?”

Board member Alan Pont asked why the Ōmārama Residents’ Association volunteers could not manage the bins and be paid the \$3,000 per month.

“But they’re still going to have to get rid of it,” Mr Reid said.

Board member Steve Dalley said it was part of a bigger problem and recycling should be considered. “It’s not going to go away.”

Mrs Tavendale said she would speak with officers about options.

“At the end of the day Ōmārama is a hot spot. The problem is not going to go away.”

Mr Reid said successive governments had pushed for “bringing in tourists” without offering solutions for the problems that came with it.

Christmas lights for Ōtemātātā

At its meeting, the board approved a \$3,000 grant from its community grants fund to the Ōtemātātā Residents’ Association to help pay for Christmas tree lights.

Staff noted officers had not received full details on the proposal, including ownership of the lights, installation, and how they would be connected to power.

“This limits how far officers can assess the request. “The board is best placed to assess whether the request for funding aligns with its priorities and available funding.”

Mr Dalley, a member of the Ōtemātātā Association, abstained from voting.

The next Ahuriri Community Board meeting is Monday, November 30, 2026.

Situation vacant

Retail Staff Member Wanted – People Person - GlenCraigs/The Merino Story

We're looking for a friendly, outgoing staff member who **loves meeting people and enjoys interacting with a wide range of customers and likes working in a team**

If you're approachable, energetic, reliable, and genuinely enjoy making people feel welcome, we'd love to hear from you!

The role:

- **Currently four half-day shifts per week available.** These shifts can involve some weekend work.
- Additional **backup/cover opportunities** available over the next 6 months
- Computer savvy a plus

We're looking for someone who:

- Enjoys talking and connecting with people
- Has a warm, positive and welcoming personality
- Is able to make sales and takes pride in providing great customer service

If this sounds like you, we'd love to hear from you!

Apply: maureenvantiel@gmail.com

Hub takes shape as volunteers prepare for the worst

Just over a year since a group of volunteers first met to discuss how Ōmārama could better withstand disaster, the community's resilience hub has grown into a structured, increasingly capable network — one that has already been tested under pressure.

The Ōmārama Community Resilience Group - led by former civil defence coordinator Jan Perriam - formed in mid-2025 after an AF8 Roadshow highlighted the risks posed by an Alpine Fault rupture and other sudden emergencies.

Since then, volunteers have worked steadily with Emergency Management Otago to build a system that helps residents look after themselves and each other should an adverse event cut the town off from outside help.

The group's core role is simple: set up and run the Ōmārama Memorial Hall as the community's emergency hub, providing a first point of contact, information, and basic support until official emergency services can take over.

Emergency Management Otago advisor Danny Fountaine has guided the group through the realities of disaster response. His message has been consistent: in the first hours, communities must be ready to help themselves. Power, water, communications and road access can all fail at once. "It is incorrect to think civil defence will come in to take care of us," he told residents at one public meeting.

Progress since 2025

The group's work has been practical and incremental. Volunteers have mapped where members live to help distribute information, checked the hall for resources, created "Prepare" fridge magnet cards for households, and assembled a cupboard of basic emergency supplies — radios, chargers, torches, clipboards, cones, and identification vests.

In January, volunteers joined with Ōmārama Search and Rescue and Fire Brigade and other volunteers to help cover the logistics of hosting LandSAR teams involved in the search for missing climber Connor Purvis. Their role was to prepare packed lunches for the crews in the field.

Training has included Starlink satellite internet demonstrations, radio communications practice, and an informal discussion with a police and national crisis management employee.

The group is guided by the Ōmārama's Emergency Community Response Group, which includes Police, Fire and Emergency, Search and Rescue and First Response volunteers.

Public meetings have brought lived experience to the fore. Residents who survived the Lake Ōhau Village fire and the 2022 Ōmārama floods shared blunt lessons: don't expect to have time, keep insurance records off-site, store receipts, plan for the worst, and expect the unexpected. "Bad things do happen," fire survivor Barbara Mackay said.

Operation Snowstorm: a turning point

The group's biggest test came on May 20, 2026, during Operation Whakarite Kia Rite – Prepare to be Ready, a region-wide emergency exercise simulating a severe snowstorm. For the first time, Ōmārama's volunteers ran the community hub as if the town were isolated, power was out, roads were closed and dozens of travellers needed shelter.

Working from the hall, volunteers simulated setting up the hall – setting up registration desks, posting road and power status boards, coordinating generator support, establishing radio contact with the Waitaki Emergency Operations Centre, and organising wellbeing support for stranded families, truck drivers and evacuees.

By mid-afternoon, they were managing welfare checks for vulnerable locals, arranging food and bedding, and helping shuttle passengers from a stranded bus below the Lindis summit. With civil defence personnel unable to reach Ōmārama in the scenario, volunteers operated independently for the full exercise.

The day wasn't perfect, but it proved the community could mobilise quickly, communicate clearly and problem-solve under pressure.

"On paper anyway, we can be confident the Ōmārama community is a pretty self-sufficient bunch," the Gazette reported.

What the hub is — and isn't

The resilience hub is not a formal civil defence centre. It would not ordinarily provide overnight welfare services. Instead, it is a community-led first response, designed to keep people informed, connected and safe until trained emergency personnel arrive or conditions improve.

Its success depends on volunteers — and more are needed.

The group meets every two months and welcomes anyone willing to help and be part of a coordinated community response.

Call for new members

The group meets every two months and welcomes anyone willing to help and be part of a coordinated community response. As recent storms, fires and floods have shown, emergencies rarely give warning.

The goal is not to create fear, organisers say, but to build confidence. With more hands, Ōmārama can strengthen its ability to look after itself when the unexpected arrives.

The next meeting is 1.30pm, November 19, at the Wrinkly Rams.

The Ōmārama Resilience Hub is joining The Ōmārama Gazette Community Reports section publishing regular updates of its activities throughout the year.



The Noticeboard

To have your community notice included here
email: omaramagazette@gmail.com

Congratulations Rudi and Jeanette on becoming New Zealand Citizens - Proud to call you our Ōmārama Kiwis!

Congratulations to Natalie and Erwin, Ōmārama Top 10 Holiday Park on your recent award - the Sustainability Excellence Award at the annual TOP 10 Holiday Parks Awards - You guys are leading the way!

Our sincere condolences to Jennifer Williamson, Simon and Kirsty, Henry and Gabriela and their families on the death of their loved father and grandfather Ron Williamson last month. A memorial service for Ron was held at the Ōmārama Memorial Hall yesterday, Tuesday.

Our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Thomas (Tommy) Carter who died last month. Tommy was much-loved and a familiar face at the Ōmārama Top 10 Holiday Park and in town. Tommy's family would love to let you know there is an afternoon tea at Boots and Jandals Hotel, 3pm, Saturday, October, 24. "We would love to thank those involved in the organising and we would love to raise a glass to a bloody Legend."

Our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Ian Niles who died in August. Ian was a much loved member of the Ōmārama Golf Club - his 'home away from home' club.

A Happy September Birthday to Lesley Jackson!

Coming up: The Ōmārama Airfield hosts the Flying Start Weekend, October 24 to 26, 2026.

Kurow Medical Centre Ōmārama Clinic at the Ōmārama Community Centre, is on Tuesdays. Appointments are available 9am to 4.30pm.

To make appointments for all clinics, order repeat scripts or make enquiries please contact Kurow Medical Centre 03 436 0760 or Mackenzie Health Clinic 03 976 0503 .

www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz

The Ōmārama Community Library is open 9.30am to 11am, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Library hours can change. Email: omaramalibrary@gmail.com

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

Kurow Presbyterian Church:

Kurow Presbyterian Parish: Rev Eymbert Johannes Schoneveld, Interim Moderator, Kurow Presbyterian Parish, Waiareka-Weston Community Presbyterian Church, 48 Main Street, Weston. Phone: 022 683 5117
email: westonminister@gmail.com

The Ōmārama Golf Club Saturdays cards in 12 noon, tee-off 12.30pm. Club captain: Greg Stuart 027 438 9018, secretary: Arron Chambers 027 203 2340.

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

The Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month at the Kurow Hotel. 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 or email president Olivia Black 027 833 0869, vice-president Jess Townsend and secretary Bridie Brosnahan 027 341 3010 omaramaplaygroup@gmail.com

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 regularly at its flying ground at the Ōmārama airfield. All welcome - Contact Bevan Allan bjallan@xtra.co.nz

FENZ Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets at 7pm each Wednesday at the Ōmārama Fire Station and has its meeting on the third Wednesday of the month. If anyone would like more information about the various volunteer roles available within the fire brigade please get in touch. Email omarama@fireandemergency.nz or contact Jack on 020 4045 0909. You can follow us on Facebook (Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade)

During winter months a gentle exercises and social afternoon group meets at the Otematata District Club at 1.30pm Thursday afternoons during winter. Gold coin donation and a cuppa after the exercises. Contact Shirley - 021 165 6439, or Diane 021 237 9636.

Waitaki Newcomers Network: For more information about this group and to subscribe to regular updates send contact details to E: waitaki@newcomers.co.nz W: www.newcomers.co.nz F: facebook.com/WaitakiNewcomersNetwork/

Plunket Line: 0800 933 922

To read more, enjoy more photos and watch our place 'come to life' check out our Facebook page and website. facebook.com/omaramagazette/
www.omaramagazette.nz

To receive email alerts between monthly editions of the Omarama Gazette sign up to our 'Local List'. Email 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 November Issue of the Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, November 4, 2026.**

Please submit copy
by Thursday, October 29, 2026



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!!Upcoming vacancies!!

Help make a difference in our community.

The Residents' Association of Ōmārama will hold its annual meeting in October and is looking for volunteers from our community to fill the following roles; secretary and treasurer. There is full support for newcomers to either role, as well as outsourced formal training available, if wished, for those new to the role.

Both positions offer a valuable opportunity to build experience in primary leadership roles of an organisation.

Secretary

The Association is on the lookout for a new secretary.

This is a great opportunity for someone who is organised, reliable and a good communicator, and who would like to play an active part in supporting our local community.

The position requires: attendance at monthly meetings, agenda preparation, minute taking and circulation, handling of correspondence and checking the mailbox, ensuring relevant information is circulated between meetings.

The time commitment is modest, and you will have support from the existing committee.

If you are interested, please contact Vicky Chambers 021 296 5782 or email omarama.secretary@gmail.com

Treasurer

The Association is looking for a treasurer to join our team.

Ideally, we are looking for someone who lives locally and would be available to attend monthly meetings or take part via video link on a regular basis.

You don't need to be a qualified accountant, just have a willingness to help, an eye for detail, and an interest in supporting our local community. A knowledge of Xero is beneficial but not essential.

The position requires management of the association's bank account and payments, preparation of records of income and expenditure for monthly meetings, producing annual accounts, and annual financial information as required by Charities Services.

If you are interested in the position, please get in touch with Vicky Chambers either by phone 021 296 5782 or email omarama.secretary@gmail.com

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

**The association's email address is
omarama.committee@gmail.com**

The Community Reports

Ōmārama Police



Call triple one (111) when you need an emergency response from police, fire or ambulance. Use Ten Five (105) to report things that don't need urgent Police assistance.

Usual office contact details: Senior Constable Nayland Smith

Sole charge Constable / Omarama / Po Box 101, Omarama 9448.

Phone: (03) 438 9559 / Ext: 34580 /

mailto:nayland.smith@police.govt.nz

Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade



By Chief Fire Officer Jack Zorab

The brigade would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make our 60th anniversary celebrations such a special occasion last month. It was fantastic to see so many past and present members, families, supporters and community members come together to celebrate six decades of service in Ōmārama. Volunteer brigades are built on people, and the anniversary was a great reminder of the generations of locals who have given their time to protect and support our community.

A special thank you goes to everyone who helped organise the festivities, contributed photos and memorabilia, shared stories, or simply came along to reconnect with old friends. We also appreciated the

many kind messages from former members who couldn't attend but were keen to be part of the milestone in their own way.

One of the highlights of the celebrations was the opportunity to host the beautifully restored Nissan fire engine, generously loaned to us by the Wānaka Transport and Toy Museum. The appliance gave many former members a chance to reminisce about earlier days in the brigade, while younger visitors enjoyed seeing how firefighting equipment has changed over the years.

We were also fortunate to take the appliance to Ōmārama School, where students had the chance to climb aboard, explore the truck and learn a little about both the history of the brigade and modern firefighting. We'd like to sincerely thank the Wānaka Transport and Toy Museum for making the vehicle available to us, and Tarras Logistics for transporting it to and from Ōmārama free of charge. Their generosity helped add something truly special to the anniversary weekend.

Our station open day was another highlight, with plenty of local families stopping by to meet firefighters, look through the appliances and have a turn on the hose. Seeing children and parents alike enjoying the station was a reminder of the strong connection between the brigade and the community we serve.

As the anniversary celebrations unfolded, it was impossible not to think about the generations of volunteers who have answered the call over the past 60 years. From members who served decades ago to those answering the call today, the brigade's story has always been one of local people stepping up when their community needed them.

As we begin our next 60 years, we're always keen to welcome new volunteers who want to become part of that story.

Looking ahead, we're well into planning for our annual golf tournament fundraiser over Labour Weekend. If you'd like to support the event through sponsorship, prizes or donations, we'd love to hear from you.

On behalf of the brigade, thank you for your continued support. Reaching 60 years is a significant milestone, and it would not have been possible without the commitment of generations of volunteers and the backing of the community they proudly serve.



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Brodie Craig CA

Ōmārama MenzShed

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

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



Ōmārama Golf Club

Saturday Club Day
Cards in 12 noon and tee-off at 12.30pm.

If you are interested in joining the club
email Arron Chambers,
secretary@omaramagolfclub.co.nz for details.
Club captain: Greg Stuart phone: 027 438 9018
Secretary: Arron Chambers phone: 027 203 2340
email secretary@omaramagolfclub.co.nz

www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

Age Concern Ōmārama

The next 'Pop-up Cafe' will be 1pm to 3pm Monday, October 12, 2026.

The guest speaker is the Livingwell Disability Resource Centre's Rochelle Fox.

She will suggest simple and practical solutions to maintain your independence, along with giving up-to-date information and resources, give a demonstration of assistive products and carry out walking stick and walker height and safety checks.

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 / Thurs - Fri 9-12.30pm



OMARAMA PLAYGROUP



All children under 6
and their parent(s) / caregiver(s)

welcome!

MEETS EVERY WEDNESDAY
DURING SCHOOL TERM
9.30AM – 11.30AM



Omarama Community Centre
Playgroup Room



Find us on Facebook:
Omarama Playgroup

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 have a potter, and also to pop in any plants they may have ready to go in. Join the Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/742877880594146>

And watch this growing space, Contact: Jennie Hales, jenniehollows@hotmail.com

Let's get growing together!

Ōmārama Community Pantry

It's Spring!

Our Community Pantry is now open through the day.

Please take what you need and leave what you can.

You are welcome to leave surplus food, plants, and flowers.

Please take all 'hardware' to the 'Gift Shop' at the Recycle Recovery Centre and books to the stall at Four Square Omarama. These raise funds for our volunteer fire brigade and first response units.

The Pantry volunteers do not have the resources to dispose of unwanted goods.

The Ōmārama Community Pantry is at the entrance to the community gardens and picnic area at the Ōmārama Memorial Hall and Community Centre.

No donations are necessary but if you'd feel more comfortable giving a small koha this will go to our two community gardens, at the community centre and the school.

Take what you need, leave what you can.





AHURIRI CATCHMENT COMMUNITY GROUP

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – Ahuriri Catchment Community Group

DATE	Friday, 30 October 2026
TIME	4.00 pm to 5.30 pm
VENUE	Omarama Community Centre Meeting Room
RSVP	0210722113 or bridget@irricon.co.nz by Friday 23 rd October please

Talking Café



Rochell Fox Livingwell Centre - Mobile Van Service

- Simple and practical solutions to maintain your independence
- Up-to-date information and resources
- Demonstration of assistive products and the ability to purchase them
- Walking stick and walker height-and-safety check.



Monday 12th October 2026: 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Venue: Omarama Community Centre
Chain Hills Highway, Omarama

All Ages Welcome

For Further Information:

Age Concern Otago-Waitaki
P 03 434 7008

E NthOtago@ageconcernotago.co.nz

Ōmārama School

- Alison, Jacob, Taylor, Kay and Ange.

The end of the term saw students finalising their Science Fair boards, preparing for the Science expert to come and judge. They felt nervous but competent about the investigation they had completed. The boards looked amazing and students were able to talk competently about their Science learning. Y7 1st - Maddie, Y4-6 1st Lou-

Students enjoyed an afternoon with the old fire truck - thank you for visiting Omarama School



This was a fun afternoon, enjoyed by all on a beautiful sunny afternoon - thanks Nic Leopold. Children were keen to hear all about the history of this old beauty and then go exploring!

Last week we shared some songs and RAPs to the Twizel community (Linkage group, TELC, Kindy and to anyone wandering through the Market square). We had been researching, creating a RAP to align with the Twizel ARTs festival. The theme was endangered birds and braided rivers and our students created their own RAPS accompanied by some music for the Twizel community. Thanks to Anne Sweney for supporting us. We were very proud of their efforts and their diligence and the community enjoyed our visit.



Ōmārama School contact details:

Phone: 03 438 9815

principal@omarama.school.nz, office@omarama.school.nz

www.omarama.school.nz



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Jo 027 846 5483

Situation vacant

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We are seeking to employ a Part-time Position or casual for a Rural Medical Receptionist.

Kōrero mō te tūranga - About the role

The applicant must be reliable, have excellent presentation, attention to detail, proficient understanding of English and a professional, helpful manner. Indici experience is preferred. Computer confidence and excellent telephone skills are essential, as is being able to liaise with Patients and other medical providers.

Hours and days negotiable for the successful applicant.

Mōu - About you

Key Responsibilities:

- Meeting and greeting patients
- Answering phones
- Assisting patients with their queries both over the phone and via email
- Scheduling appointments
- Processing invoices and payments
- General office administration including processing referrals and procedures
-

Our ideal candidate will have:

- Indici experience (preferred)
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to multitask with a can do attitude
- Meticulous attention to detail
- Culturally sensitive and aware of diversity within our population
- Experience and interest in working with Māori and other ethnic health an advantage

You must be a New Zealand resident to apply for this position.

To apply for the position please send your CV and cover letter to the Practice Manager Tom McCarthy:

tom@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz



Kurow Medical Centre

8 Wynyard St, Kurow
P: 03 4360760

E: info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz

W: www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz
www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre

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**Due to unforeseen circumstances,
unfortunately, there will be no clinic
in Omarama until further notice.**

We apologise for any inconvenience caused

For appointments, please contact

Kurow Medical Centre on 03 436 0760

or

Mackenzie Health Centre on 03 976 0503



Notary Public Services Affidavits and Declarations

David Stone, Lake Ohau

03 438 9653, 027 490 9118, david@stone.org.nz



ŌAMARU

Community Funding Session

**WEDNESDAY
14 OCTOBER**

4:30 PM

**ŌAMARU OPERA HOUSE
94 THAMES ST, ŌAMARU**

**Need funding for a
community project?**

Come and meet your local funders to
learn more about the funding available
and how to apply.



**RSVP ONLINE AT [OCT.ORG.NZ](https://www.oct.org.nz) OR:
0800 10 12 40 | Info@OCT.ORG.NZ**



KUROW

Community Funding Session

**WEDNESDAY
14 OCTOBER**

12:30 PM

**KUROW INFORMATION CENTRE
57 BLEDISLOE ST, KUROW**

**Need funding for a
community project?**

Come and meet your local funders to
learn more about the funding available
and how to apply.



**RSVP ONLINE AT OCT.ORG.NZ OR:
0800 10 12 40 | Info@OCT.ORG.NZ**

OMARAMA FIRE BRIGADE

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Ambrose Format



Proceeds to Omarama Fire Brigade

EVERYONE WELCOME – Golfers and Non-Golfers

(Individuals can enter and teams will be decided on day @ \$50pp)

Saturday, October 24, 2026
\$200 for your team of 4

Cards in by 12.00pm Tee Off 12.30pm

BBQ on-course and Meal afterwards

Great Prizes and Raffles, EFTPOS AVAILABLE

Entries and Enquiries to:

Arron Chambers

arronandvema@xtra.co.nz

0272032340

Ōmārama Resilience Hub

By Pam Harding

We are a group of volunteers, who formed the ORH group after the Waitaki Emergency Management team ran an information evening in 2025 in the Omarama Community Hall about the Alpine Fault.

A public meeting was organized to follow this and we met at the Wrinkly Rams a few weeks later, with Danny from the Otago Emergency Management team. We had attendance from Ohau, Twizel and Omarama residents and the group was formed.

Omarama already has a wonderful team of professional and volunteer emergency services that serve our community in the event of a minor or major emergency. Our role is to be available to provide baseline assistance where it is needed.

As a result, we have gathered information and resources that enable a group of volunteers, in the event of any type of emergency, to manage the Community Hub and support the professional teams as required. For example, On January 6, 2026, we prepared lunches for the LandSAR teams searching for a missing climber. A team assembled, liaised with Jack, ordered food to fill gaps from donated food and met each evening to have lunches ready for 6am pick up the following day.

We welcome new members.

Meetings are held 1.30pm, every 3rd Thursday of every 2nd month.

We operate in a semi-formal manner. Jan Perriam, is our leader. Jan has over 20 years of experience with emergency management support. Pam Young is her deputy, and Pam Harding records the meetings. Ruth Grundy is a member of the hub group and also has a key role as Public Information Manager in the existing Omarama Emergency Response Group. We link with existing Emergency Management personnel.

More information is available in a large pink folder situated at the Community Hall in the waiting room area. It sits on top of our grey resource cupboard and contains:

- An Overview of Public Information Management Response
- A Summary of ORH actions to date.
- A Record of the Meetings held so far
- A copy of the fridge magnet distributed to the Community
- A copy of the Official Emergency Hub Guide

Please feel free to read it. We created it for you.

NEXT MEETING

**1.30pm, Thursday, November 19, 2026 at the Wrinkly Rams.
Come and find out more.**

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.



Twizel Community Care Centre

Benmore Place, Twizel, 7901

admin@twizelcare.co.nz

03 4350687

Open Monday to Friday 9am-4pm
The Twizel Community Care Trust
offers a range of services including:

Forms for Work & Income, IRD, Immigration, Passport & other Government agencies

Twizel/Tekapo Community Vehicle – booking system for trips Monday to Friday

Frozen meals – A variety for purchase including main meals and snack sizes

Food bank – Anyone requiring assistance with food, contact us for confidential help (donations of non-perishable or foods that can be frozen always welcome)

Plus – access to a computer, printing, free WIFI, community notice boards and Cancer Society gazebos for hire



Ngā ratonga ki te manawa o te whenua

Heartland Services



Twizel Linkage

Morning Tea

Come along to LinkAge where we meet up for company, a giggle, and a catch up, with guest speakers, entertainment & up-to date information, plus much more.

Every Thursday - 10.30am-12pm

All very welcome

Community Lounge at the Events Centre

Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club

The Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club
meets at 7.30pm on the
first Monday of each month at the Kurow Hotel.
Email: upperwaitaki@youngfarmers.co.nz

Join the Facebook group.

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Omarama Practice:

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Omarama, 9412

☎ 027 214 2533

@ info@waitakichiropractic.co.nz

🌐 www.waitakichiropractic.co.nz

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Vicky Munro

Otematata

03 438 7855 021 438745



Alona Shaw

Omarama

027 773 4214

Miles Anderson MP for Waitaki

**Your local MP welcomes
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waitaki.mp@parliament.govt.nz

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Authorised by M Anderson, miles.anderson@national.org.nz



Ōmārama Residents' Association

The Annual Meeting of the Residents' Association of Ōmārama is 7pm, Thursday, October 15, 2026 at the Ōmārama Community Centre.

This will be followed by October's general meeting
An invitation is extended to all

The annual meeting to include:

*Election of Officers

*Presentation of Annual and Financial Reports

Contacts:

Steve Grundy, chairperson, 021 545 150

Vicky Chambers, secretary, 021 296 5782

The minutes of the previous AGM are available from the
secretary.

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



Ōmārama Community Library

The Ōmārama Community Library's
opening hours are 9.30am to 11am,
Wednesdays and Saturdays,
at the Ōmārama Community Centre.
omaramalibrary@gmail.com

Knit Night Ōmārama

Knit Night Ōmārama
5.15pm each Tuesday
at the Omarama Community Centre
Gold coin donations towards room hire
would be appreciated.

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Garden Diary - Oh, so pretty!

The blackbird slowly spreads its satin black wings and swoops low, gliding from the maple to the cherry blossom, its orange beak stuffed with dry grass, pulls up short and flicks its tail.

They're busy through the mornings but as the days warm, they move into their lazy afternoon warble, a warm, sweet, mellow accompaniment to the hum of the bees in the blossom that is everywhere.

Not all the trees are in leaf yet, but an osmosis of warmth has pulled up the greening through the veins of the earth moving it gradually up the valley from the coast In its path tresses of weeping willow turn to great curtains along the lake shore.

In the mornings now the sunshine comes softly through my window. The high country only does softly in Spring. Mostly it hides its softer vulnerable side. Right now, it is all soft new grass and pastel landscapes under dove coloured skies.

There is blossom everywhere - dainty, frothy, lacy.

The quince is covered in flowers simple and delicate like fine china, glazed in powder pink.

The cherries just want to be the belles of this year's 'coming out' parade in their 'oh, so pretty' layers of muslin petticoats.

The peaches go for colour to mark their opening season blushing from pink to cerise.

There is pear blossom – how does it think that scent is attractive? - plums and apples,

with the dogwood about to follow on with an intriguing ruse of colourful bracts – not petals, if you please?!

But not as intriguing to me as the green blossoms of the Norway maple and weeping elm with veined stained-glass petals.

There's hardly a frost now but barefoot early morning walks to visit the noisily bossy barnyard darlings leave tracks through heavy dew.

It's so easy to be lulled into a false sense of security. I remind myself that the wisteria is about to bloom. There's sure to be a hard frost to take that out.

And there's been snow at Labour Weekend before now.

Still, there's work to be done as I take the pruners to another rambler.

"The blackbird on the fence finished singing more than an hour ago.

The birch tree's nervy arms lean forward wanting nothing. Daisies

stay awake while the plain day passes over them. Here, on the grass

I come upon a stone.

If I went inside it

*I could listen to the earth's deep breathing."**

Ruth Grundy

(I garden a small space under a big sky in Omarama)

*In a Town Garden - Jan Hutchison





When circumstances beyond your control lead to a rural business crisis be it financial, climatic or personal the Rural Support Trust is ready to assist. Services are free and confidential.

0800 RURAL HELP (0800 787 254)

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

September 2026

Highest temperature: September 26, 20.3C

Lowest temperature: September 24 - 4.1C

Most rainfall: September 6, 28.2 mm

Total rainfall for September: 101.4 mm

The Ōmārama Gazette

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

To subscribe email:

omaramagazette@gmail.com

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