



Ōmārama Gazette

February 2024

Community goes to mayor for answers

Projects are planned for improvements at the Ōmārama Community Centre 'hub' but there are questions over who will pay for what and how.

Ōmārama Residents' Association volunteers had been completing these under their own steam through various fundraising efforts and grant applications. The most recent of these was a basketball half court and the Ōmārama mural.

In October, they were approached by Waitaki District Council staff who said \$225K was available for projects which met the Ōmārama Masterplan criteria. However, detail was scarce.

Nevertheless, council staff pushed on encouraging the volunteers to think 'aspirationally' and not be too focussed on budgets.

Matters came to a head last month when the volunteers failed to get answers to questions about how much money was actually available so they could make plans. With answers not forthcoming Association chairman Lindsay Purvis arranged a public meeting with Waitaki District mayor Gary Kircher, last week.

The short notice, intense two-hour meeting was well attended.

Overleaf is a snapshot of the discussions, followed by three longer reads for those who were not able to be present, and because the devil is always in the detail.

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Community goes to mayor for answers

The Ōmārama Gazette is still waiting for the response to similar questions it put to the council on January 10. The council's executive leadership team decided these should be official information requests and so imposed a 20-business-day delay on getting that information. This takes it to February 8.

This is likely to be the same if not similar information to that which was shared at the public meeting last week. (See below)

The Gazette will bring you further updates when the council responds.

'Clarity' over \$225K project spend questioned **- The snapshot**

The Ōmārama Community has left its mayor in no doubt it does not want a designer adventure playground on the former sports field reserve land, although it is not clear who has the final say on that.

And, if there was any doubt about priorities, it made it clear that what it does want instead is for the sports field to be restored – something that has been on the council-community discussion table for the past six or more years.

At short notice and in what was an intense two-hour meeting 25 to 30 people gathered at the Ōmārama Community Centre to drive home that message and to get answers to other questions it has been asking the council about Better-off Fund spend since July.

Ōmārama Residents' Association chairperson Lindsay Purvis organised the short notice meeting with Waitaki District Mayor Gary Kircher.

'Clarity' and 'transparency' were concerns of the day. Those who came looking for answers left with several topics well and truly "thrashed out" but with important details still somewhat blurry.

At the meeting the consultation process conducted ahead of the Ahuriri Community Board and Waitaki District Council's decision last December regarding the Ōmārama Masterplan options and the \$225k Better Off Funds spend was described as dubious.

Recent communications with the council were described as having an "accidental relationship with transparency", people had felt "railroaded" and 'pushed' down a path they did not want to take.

In response, Mr Kircher said he had believed the council sign-off had the community's approval and he would be asking staff about the process.

He said council staff had worked quickly because there had been criticism of the council that although the Masterplan had been signed off in 2020 it had not done a lot since.

Decisions made at the December meeting were designed to ensure work could happen at pace, he said.

Melanie Jones, of the council's economic development team, who manages the Better-Off spending in the Waitaki District was present via video link.

The snapshot, continued

While there were only a couple of topics covered at the meeting the group had to approach these from several angles to get clear answers to what were straightforward questions.

Those questions were:

1. How much of the \$225k Better-off funds did the Residents' Association have to spend on improvements to the playground and amenities at the Community Centre hub?
2. How will the dispersal of those funds be managed?
3. What progress has been made on the designation of the former Rabbit Board Land? – key to development of the Ōmārama town centre in the masterplan.

Although questions about the Better-off funding budget for Ōmārama had been asked at every meeting with council staff since July much of the information conveyed at this meeting was new and significant.

Mr Kircher said the Residents' Association was likely to get about \$125K for its projects not the full \$255K as they had been led to believe.

He said the council has allocated the money to three projects: a cycle/pedestrian track behind the Boots and Jandals Hotel carpark, addressing roading issues at the town centre and a playground development.

Regarding the playground, the meeting attendees sent council staff back to the drawing board.

In January, council staff organised for the Association's playground project team to visit to Oamaru-based Numat Group Ltd - a playground and agricultural surfacing company and Creo Space Ltd is its playground design and construction division.

This was followed by a working lunch with council staff.

Council staff followed this up with a project plan and timeline for the project team for the design and build of a substantial playground project.

The short notice meeting with Mr Kircher was to get answers before the project team was taken on a second council-led tour – this time a day-long visit to meet Timaru's CPlay's project team - and a further workshop with council staff.

The project team cancelled this visit before the public meeting with Mr Kircher.

At the conclusion last week's meeting Mr Purvis said, although they had received "some assurance" that things were going to improve, it had to be said that "the council has had an accidental relationship with transparency as far as we are concerned".

Mr Purvis said the project team would keep to the planning timelines the council staff had set out.

"There is capacity for us to do some work on the playground.

"[And] on the sports field as well because a lot of people are passionate about that," he said.

The project team had prioritised installing covered seating in front of the sports courts "and we are starting to work along those lines".

"We can now start planning with some assurance," Mr Purvis said.

Mr Kircher left Ōmārama having promised to talk to council staff about the

The snapshot, continued

consultation and communication process.

He said he would consider “going back to” the wider community to consult about restoring the sports field.

He agreed to talk to Ngai Tahu representatives at the Waitangi Day meeting at Bluff about a joint approach to the Government for the use of the former Rabbit Board land and will report back.

The project team is to decide on what they want done with the \$125K and draw up an action plan to meet the council staff’s timeline.

They will not be travelling to Timaru.

The long read because the devil is in the detail

Part one: Has the Association's playground project been hijacked?

Direct questions were put to Waitaki District mayor Gary Kircher at last week’s public meeting to find out what Better-off funding was available to the community and what it could be spent on.

In September 2022, the council applied for and was allocated \$3.71 million of Better Off funding from central government as part of the then-named Three Waters Reform process.

The funds were made available for councils to invest in community wellbeing. The Waitaki council was allocated \$225,000 [\$240,000 minus \$15,000 support costs] specifically to implement the Ōmārama town centre masterplan over three years. The Better-Off fund is a ‘draw-down’ fund – the council must present invoices for projects which meet the criteria of the initial application to get the funds.

Mr Purvis said he had called the meeting to get “some clarity” about the Better-off funds tagged for Ōmārama.

“This whole Better-off funding has been handled very poorly by the council with total lack of transparency,” Mr Purvis said.

“The community cannot move forward with any of the projects. Every project starts with a budget, that’s the first order of business every time.

“How much money do we have for our community hub and how much does the council see as being used elsewhere in town?” were the questions he put to Mr Kircher.

Mr Purvis referred to the December 12 council meeting when council placemaking lead Cyndi Christensen’s decision report was discussed and Councillor Jim Hopkins asked why the Residents’ Association’s ‘tangible’ projects were not being prioritised to receive the funding over of what were essentially ‘concepts’.

At that meeting Mr Kircher said the full amount of \$225K was “certainly not” being used for the playground project alone.

This differed from what the Residents’ Association had been told by council staff, Mr Purvis said.

“We are left not knowing how much money we have got to use for the community hub and how much has been allocated by the council to other projects in town,” he said.

OPTION 2

Additional retail area and low impact Eco Housing

- 1** Communal eco-housing for the elderly, first time home buyers, workers and visitors. Allow for community gardens and orchard.



- 2** New road link to provide alternative access to SH83 & SH8. Improved access to airfield activities and relieve traffic volumes at main intersection.

- 3** Relocate iSite next to public toilets – see Map 2. Re-use existing building as a Cultural/Dark Skies Centre



The main focus of this option is to improve the village centre, provide more housing choice with low impact eco-housing, and create a pedestrian and cyclist friendly environment. A new road link is provided from SH8 to SH83 and an option to provide an activity zone.



MAP 1

See Map 2 for village centre area options.

- 4** Option for habitable hangars adjoining airfield.



- 5** Residential housing to south of airfield. Potential for visitor accommodation mix to support airfield activities.

- 6** Activity zone area for community and visitors.
- Sports facilities
 - High ropes/ abseiling (maximize views of mountains)
 - Adventure zone hub – potential for links to airfield activities



In response, Mr Kircher said he had not been “very involved in the Ōmārama situation”.

“So I’ve had to ask a few questions ...to make sure I was up to speed.”

The council’s intention was that it be used the ways the community wanted it to be, “be community-led”, to improve local amenities, he said.

Ōmārama had a masterplan drawn up 2020. There had been criticism that not a lot had been done since.

“Really the money is only about getting in and doing some of the stuff.”

He said he was not sure of the details of what had happened and how the community had been involved in the process.

“But it was certainly not our intention to be too prescriptive about what it gets used for.”

- continued over

However, the council also had a responsibility to make sure it was “used as well as possible”.

He said the council had chosen three projects to get the funds.

They were; a playground development, a cycle/pedestrian track behind the Boots and Jandals Hotel carpark, and “the other is looking at some of the roading issues and so forth”.

“I thought these things had been identified by the community, so I’m happy to have feedback on how much say or contribution the community had. Are they things that they do want to see happen?”

As far as allocating sums to each project it was “a bit chicken and egg”, he said.

It depended on how much each of the roading and track projects cost and on what “you want in the playground”.

The long read , part one - continued

He said, hypothetically, the track could cost \$20,000 to \$30,000, and \$80,000 could be allocated to “rudimentary changes” to roading.

“That leaves roughly \$125,000 for the playground,” Mr Kircher said.

“Inevitably, there will be new ideas come forward. There’s no reason not to listen to those, but they need to stack up against what has already been planned.”

The community could use the \$125,000 as seed funding to fundraise to cover any additional monies required to complete a playground project, Mr Kircher told the meeting.

The \$125,000 is at present tagged by the council for developing playground design concepts.

In November, when the Residents’ Association was approached by council officers, the ideas the members present put forward were for; a natural playground, shelter and seating around the tennis courts, a basketball half court, a barbeque unit, resurrection of the rugby field, a flying fox, and additional exercise equipment.

These choices were backed by an informal survey conducted by Ahuriri Community Board member Mike King, and the survey information collated from earlier community meetings dating back to 2018.

In Mr King’s survey of 50 residents one person voted for an adventure park.

So where did the idea for the “think big” playground attraction come from and what was the urgency driving decisions, given the Better-off Funding does not have to be spent until June 2027.

Ms Jones was questioned several times from the floor about this.

“I think one of the reasons the adventure playground was pushed up the list was that Parks and Rec have got money, like \$200K for the next two years in their budget, so that’s why we went with it.

“We [the council] don’t need to spend a lot in Better-off Funding but ... we can take a bit of Better-off Funding to do some concept development and then tap into the money that’s already in the LTP (Long Term Plan).”

This way council staff could then ask for the council to include the design concepts in the LTP for consideration for spending in 2025 and 2026, “leaving more money to spend on other projects”.

She was then asked why that money could not be spent on the sports field.

“When we have gone through the process and through the Ahuriri Community Board nobody said that.

“The team that put their hand up to drive the project were focussed on the playground and weren’t interested in the parking and the other opportunity around Sutherland Rd, so this is where we’ve got to,” Ms Jones said.

Ōmārama resident and former councillor Craig Dawson said he felt the council was “driving the discussion.

“You are driving the narrative. I get that you want to tick the boxes and get the job done, that’s human nature, but we have got a very clear visioning plan.”

There had been “universal” community agreement the former sports field should be irrigated and put to use again by adults and children.

Introducing “playground equipment from Numat” would be in addition to this, provided the community agreed, he said.

“Just to clarify about our project... to be fair we were pushed into those discussions by Cyndi,” Mr Purvis said.

Project team member Maurice Cowie agreed. “We were railroaded.”

Mr Purvis said he saw no point in the team going to visit the \$3.3 million-dollar CPlay playground in Timaru – this was what council staff proposed the team should do this week.

“We were pushed into this million-dollar playground ... I don’t see the point in going to Timaru ... because it doesn’t pertain to us. It’s not what we want,” he said.

Ms Jones said there was no “figure on the table as far as the playground” was concerned. “The important thing is we were just trying to guide the conversation ... as I understood it the team that had put their hands up to drive the project were only interested in looking at the community hub and the area around it.”

Staff were taking the lead from the project team and had also put ideas and concepts on the table for consideration, she said.

Several at the meeting who responded were adamant, they wanted a sports field.

“It’s looking like we need to go back to the community and talk more a bit more,” Mr Kircher said.

Earlier in the meeting project team member Hank Verheul said one of the reasons the team visited Oamaru in January was to get answers to questions from council staff about available funds.

“What’s the story with the money? What are the terms and conditions? What can we do, what can’t we do?”

The team came away from that meeting with the understanding that it was up to it to decide how it wanted to spend the money – the full \$225K, he said.

“Playground, rugby field, whatever that was our job not the council’s job.”

“Now we’ve been advised that’s going to be gobbled up in the masterplan,” Mr Verheul said.

“The masterplan was created with the community, that’s what the community said they wanted. So if we’re just going to throw it out the door and we’re going to spend it on a whole lot of other things, then what was the point of doing the masterplan in the first place?” Mr Kircher said.

“There might be some other ideas put forward that haven’t been thought of before but they would need to stack up against it,” he said.

It was possible the community had not properly been asked which things from the masterplan they wanted included, Mr Kircher said.

Council staff had explained that the funds were to be used to “better off our community”, Mr Verheul said.

“It wasn’t to be used for parking.”

The group had understood the full \$225K was available for its projects.

“...now it’s down to \$100K-odd,” he said.

Mr Purvis said the committee was only made aware of the Better-off funds in October.

“The clarity on this from you guys has been pretty poor. We should have had some meetings with us telling us we had this money coming, to prepare for it, think about it and [be told] we’re going to employ this lady to help you with that. But all of sudden it was dumped on us,” he said.

Mr Kircher said there were “a bunch of things you’ve identified in the past”, and now with the \$225K there was a “chance to do something about them”. *-continued over*

The long read , part one - continued

There was some money already allocated to Ōmārama in the LTP.

But this was reviewed every three years and subject to change.

There was \$1.7million set aside in the LTP in 2031 for a sports field in Ōmārama.

“Basically, it’s in the never-never because it relies on a whole lot of things happening along the way and, quite frankly, with the challenges we have, the chance we have getting to that point and having \$1.7million is not a lot ,” Mr Kircher said.

“So why is it there?” Mr Dawson said.

The LTP budget focussed on that which needed to be done in the immediate term - the next three years - and the rest of the plan was for things that might be nice to have, noted “so we don’t lose track of it”, Mr Kircher said.

However, given the present challenges there was “no money for something that would be nice to do”.

“[The 1.7m was] on the never-never because we are absolutely struggling to deal with all the water infrastructure.

“There is no money sitting there for the sports field. It’s there because it would be something that would be nice to do. Things change there’s a constant reset [of the LTP].

“It comes back to the \$225,000, if you’re not wanting it allocated on those particular things, what do you want it spent on, given there won’t be 100% agreement from everybody.

“We can go on talking and talking and talking, which is exactly what the community accuse the council of doing, and not doing anything about it,” he said.

Ōmārama resident Kay Verheul asked if the proposed designer playground was for the community or for visitors.

She pointed out there were very few Ōmārama preschoolers coming through at present.

“We need to rethink the playground thing and do a sports field because that’s going to be of more value for us and the whole area.”

It could be used for school sports and would attract schools from around the region for “different games, rugby or cricket or whatever”, be multifunctional and include a running track.

Yes, funds could be spent on improving the playground “we could put a few dollars into that” but a sports field was more important, she said.

“I think we need to look at that as much more important ... the council have decided on three things without proper consultation...we should have been consulted more before you made that decision on those three things,” Mrs Verheul said.

“And I didn’t understand that there hadn’t been more [consultation] there,” Mr Kircher said.

“Personally, I’m not a fan of a million-dollar playground or anything like that but I thought that’s what you wanted,” he said.

“That’s why I asked, is that money for our community or is it for visitors?” Mrs Verheul said.

There were “different ways of achieving things,” Mr Kircher said.

He said Ōmārama Airfield Company chairperson Clive Geddes had told the council there was a “wonderful green area” available at the airfield in front of the Pink Glider Café.

“That’s irrigated and they’d be very happy to have that used as a sports field ...that might be a very easy way to achieve it.”

[In the Ōmārama Masterplan Option 2 The sports field is given over to an Activity/adventure Zone for community and visitors with potential for links to airfield activities]

Ōmārama resident Judy Piner said the community had made it “very clear” what they wanted was a sports field...” plus exercise gear for adults, “small bites of stuff that we could achieve out of the \$225K”.

“There is already a piece of land ...but we don’t want a Numat designed playground ... we do not even have the kids coming along to use it.

“We need to look at what the RAOI have identified in the past, tennis courts, things which have proved successful. Nowhere have they said let’s get a Numat-designed playground. We need to look closely at what they have identified,” Mrs Piner said.

Mr Kircher asked, if the community did not want a playground how would it come to an agreement about what it did want?

“Is the wider community in favour of a sports ground,” he said.

“It’s actually in the visioning document so why can’t we go with it,” Mr Dawson said.

“Because there’s a bunch of other things in there too,” Mr Kircher said.

Mr Verheul repeated it had been understood the \$225K was for the community to be spent on “what we decide - not roading, not footpaths, not that sort of thing”.

“As a Residents’ Association our brief is to look after the hall and this community hub, not the streets that’s your job.”

“The footpaths come out of the amenity fund...always have,” Mr Dawson said.

“We don’t want to go any further on the playground until we’ve had a community discussion on the sports field so don’t keep pushing, please,” Mrs Verheul said.

Ms Jones said the council did not want to push a project that “you don’t want”.

“I think this is great because this is where we want to be ... you need to tell us what you want to prioritise and then we can help work through how we can do it... Please tell us if you don’t want to do a playground,” Ms Jones said

“If you don’t want to do a playground then we can just stop it. We can cancel that visit to CPlay.”

[The project team told Ms Christensen a week earlier it wanted the trip to CPlay cancelled]

“The important thing is we are on a timeframe here ... everyone is looking for us to meet deadlines so you want to keep moving quickly,” Ms Jones said.

Mr Verheul said the agreed timeline need not change.

Mr Purvis said there was a need to spend some money on playground improvements.

Project team member Michelle Kitchen said the present playground needed to be brought “up to spec” because there were issues with compliance.

Mr Dawson said there was already money for that in existing council budgets.

“This is a new project for betterment or something further to be developed.” He said.

Mr Cowie asked if the group could get copies of the council strategies which the masterplan fed into, so it could understand the council’s thinking, know what was being planned and “not be going backwards and forwards” to find out what work was underway and was already budgeted for.

Mrs Verheul told Mr Kircher the council needed to improve its communication.

“You’re probably starting to understand how frustrated we all are because we haven’t

The long read, part one - continued

been communicated with. All of a sudden you've come up with three things off the town plan that we don't approve of.
"That's happening across the board, you need to get your communication skills up as a council," she said.
"I need to have a talk with staff about what has happened up to now," Mr Kircher said.

The long read because the devil is in the detail

Part two: How will the \$225K Better-off funds be managed?

Ratepayers gathered at last week's public meeting to discuss \$225K of Better-off funds also wanted to know how the dispersal would be managed.

Early in the meeting Ms Jones reinforced there was \$225K available to implement key initiatives from the Masterplan and that none had been spent to date.

The group was also told there was \$200K set aside in the LTP for each of 2025 and 2026 to spend on a playground.

Better-off funds could be supplemented by community fundraising and by that set aside in the LTP "which was just around the corner", but LTP monies could not be guaranteed," she said.

"We can put the Better-off Funding toward that [a designer playground] and if the money stays in the LTP, and we don't know whether it will, that's the process ... we can put the two together and we can probably do something a bit more special," she said.

Residents' Association Project team member Michelle Kitchen and secretary Vicky Chambers asked if the council could supplement the Better-off funds with monies from existing budgets, or development contributions, or RMA funds to which the answer was, yes, provided the project met the criteria for that spending.



Ōmārama Resident Ann Patterson said she understood Better-off funds were not paid out by the Government until projects were complete.

She wanted to know who would be responsible or liable for payment if there was any shortfall.

"When do you actually receive the funds? Can you take them as the project goes on and if, for some reason the money is turned down at the end of the project, who pays? Mr Kircher said he would need to

talk to staff about how they “want to deal with that internally” but that the council “was good for it”.

“I just want to give some reassurance that if that’s the situation there is nothing stopping us paying bills along the way and getting that repaid when we can draw down the money.

“If we’ve committed ...to this project we’ve committed. We can’t go back on it. We wouldn’t go back on it...bills will get paid along the way it’s not up to the community to cover the shortfall or whatever. As long as we are working together it will get done,” Mr Kircher said.

Ms Jones said the council had to report every six months over the two-year period to MBIE who administered the Better-off funds and it had sent its first report in January.

The projects were phased, and the council’s report estimated the amount of money that would be spent by the given date and it would invoice MBIE “against that timeline”. MBIE would make sure the council had ticked the boxes before paying out, she said.

Mrs Chambers asked if the Association could “use the funding as we go” and be funded by the council “until such point as they get their money”.

She also asked for assurance the parking signage installed in the town centre car park before Christmas would not be paid for from the \$225K

In what was a reversal of the stated council decision made in December Mr Kircher said it had not been used for that.

Ms Jones said the reason the council Chief Executive was delegated the authority to sign off on spending was to speed up the decision-making process.

“I don’t need to wait for months to put it to council because it’s all aligned with what we’re all trying to deliver which is better assets and facilities for our communities,” she said.

“As far as the CE signing off, someone has to sign it off at council,” Mr Kircher said.

“It’s not saying what you must do and what you must not do, it’s to make sure its meeting the criteria from Government.

“I want to know that the community is getting what they’ve chosen,” he said.

“If there is some reason a project doesn’t get the big tick is the Ōmārama Residents’ Association going to be liable?” Mrs Patterson said.

“If you’ve gone ahead and spent money without agreement from council then that’s a problem but it should just never arise If you work closely with [staff], “ Mr Kircher said.

“I want to know if we would be liable that’s all,” Mrs Patterson said.

“Overall there’s supposed to be a good relationship. We want to make sure we get on to that track and make sure that things are done together, and there won’t be any problem at all,” Mr Kircher said.

“I’ve lived long enough to see things go wrong and have to front up but I don’t want to be held liable for anything that’s done here under the Association that’s not given the tick,” Mrs Patterson said.

“I just don’t see there would be anything that any of you would be able to sign off that would get done without having agreement ...as long as we’ve said we’re okay with it and you’ve stuck to the budget and it’s within the allocation then I can’t see how things could go wrong,” Mr Kircher said.

Ms Jones said the council was “the gatekeeper” to the Government spending.

-continued over

The long read, part two - continued

“We have to provide updates to Government about what we have spent the money on.

The council had to show results and progress “otherwise the Government won’t pay the money out”.

“The work has to be done and then the Government goes, yes, you’ve ticked the boxes here’s the money,” Ms Jones said.

Ideally, the cost would be determined at the outset as would how much would come from Better-off funds and capital costs and how much extra money would need to be found.

“Then if those funds can’t be found we do the project in stages ,” Ms Jones said.

The long read because the devil is in the detail

Part three: What progress on the Rabbit Board land disposal?

The Waitaki District Council was roundly criticised for the protracted delay in addressing the “eyesore” which was the vacant former Rabbit Board land in the centre of Ōmārama at the meeting to discuss funding to implement the Ōmārama Masterplan.

Suggestions were made this should be dealt to urgently and perhaps some Better-off funding could be put towards resolving the issue of purchase and development of the land which the Masterplan proposed.

Former councillor Craig Dawson said that if the council was serious about the outcomes of the ratepayer meetings which produced the Omarama Masterplans it should address the issue.

Ratepayers had said they wanted the council to buy the land, perhaps resell to a developer to create parking space and any profits from that could be put into other projects, he said.

The land was passed to Environment Canterbury in the late 1980s. It is now Crown [Linz] Land— a reserve administered by the Department of Conservation and at present maintained by ECan on Doc’s behalf.

Reportedly, a disposal process is underway. This has began in 2016.

This would involve offering the land to Ngai Tahu who has first right of refusal before it can be sold on the open market.

“What we are doing here is skirting around the edges with little Disneyland playfields,” Mr Dawson said.

“What you are going to do is you’re going to chew up funds.”

“Get developers in there because then you’d be able to solve the parking issues.

“I was absolutely devastated to see the CEO had the final sign off on your spend.

“This is our money, our ratepayer’s money ... we should be having the say on where that money goes.

“Until we deal with that land over there, we are wasting our time if you want to make this a better place.

“If you want to talk about parking, its over there, [indicating the ECan land] if you want to talk about development, it’s all over there. If you want to talk about a

dedicated library space it's all over there," Mr Dawson said.

Residents' Association chairperson Lindsay Purvis said, while he agreed with Mr Dawson, it was "a bridge too far at the moment".

"We're talking about using this money now because we've got it now," he said.

Mr Dawson suggested using \$100K to get it the land to the market.

"It's not ours to sell," Residents' Association member Maurice Cowie said.

Instead, because it was reserve land it should not be sold but given back to the community to use as a reserve, he said.

Mr Kircher said the council had let ECan know, as part of the Masterplan process, that if it wanted to sell then the council wanted to have "first say".

He said he did not agree with Mr Dawson that it would solve the parking problems.

Mr Dawson said sorting out the land was "the future of this town".

"This is where it's going to expand."

What was needed was for a notice of legal designation to be put on the land, he said.

Mr Kircher said that, while the Government must first offer it to Ngai Tahu, there could be a joint approach between the council and Ngai Tahu made to the Government to come to an arrangement.

"What I want to do is to talk to Ngai Tahu property and see if there is some joint arrangement...to get the result the community wants."

Mr Kircher said he had yet to talk to Ngai Tahu.

Mr Dawson said, while these were "big things" from the masterplan they had to be addressed and not "handed down to the next generation".

Long-time ratepayer and holiday homeowner Ian Chapman said the land was an "eyesore" and a fire hazard.

"I know it's not the council's problem, but it should be the council's problem because it's an eyesore. There are homes [on the land] homes which could be used. I believe the council should take leadership on it.

-continued over

The former Rabbit Board land in central Ōmārama is now often neglected and the homes are unoccupied.



The long read, part two - continued

“If Ngai Tahu are involved, they should be doing it today not in five years’ time, not in 10 years’ time. It’s a disgrace for the whole town. This town is a beautiful town and that lets it down,” Mr Chapman said.

Mr Dawson said it was “what the people wanted” and it needed “some legal force to push it on”.

Mr Purvis asked Mr Kircher for assurance he would contact Ngai Tahu “in the very near future and get the ball rolling, if that’s where it starts rolling”.

“We pay [ECan] rates on that ground, we are entitled to have a say,” Mr Chapman said.

“We can all have a say on it. It doesn’t mean anything is going to happen.” Mr Kircher said.

He understood the council had stepped in previously to address the fire risk and there was an avenue for him to discuss matters with ECan’s chief executive through the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.

“There’s no law that says we can require the Government to sell it to us and the best way to do it is to work with Ngai Tahu because the Government has to offer it to them first,” he said.

He said he would raise it at the Waitangi Day Otago/Southland celebrations at Bluff this week and find out who to talk to at Ngai Tahu property.

“They are not part of corporate Ngai Tahu but we can at least get that part of the conversation going about what their interests are.”

“Ngai Tahu might want to have a presence... There’s opportunities there.” He said.

Ōmārama resident Ann Patterson said she had a small parcel of land with the same issues.

Albeit it was a small parcel of land but she had needed to deal with the same agencies and it was “sorted in six to seven months”, she said.

Mr Purvis asked Mr Kircher to report back to the Residents’ Association about his negotiations because the issue had been debated for 10 to 20 years with no resolution.

“And it goes around in circles as it is doing today,” Mr Purvis said.



Trail Journeys expands north

Ōmārama's Trail Adventures has sold to Australian-owned company Trail Journeys – one of the region's earliest cycle trail tourism businesses.

Clyde-based General manager Simon Stevens said the company believed the move was a “natural extension” and that the Trail Adventures set-up was a perfect fit. Trail Adventures was bought by Vaughan Williams and Aimee Snelgrove from founders Scott and Dee-Ann Fitzgerald in November 2019. “Aimee and Vaughan built a terrific business,” he said. He said what attracted them to the business was the couple’s approach to their customers and the region. “Nothing should really change.” The present staff would retain their employment and Vaughan would continue to work at the Ōmārama depot until the end of the season,

However, Simon believed there was potential to grow the business with “no limitation on capacity” because it had more vehicles available. We have been in the rail trail business in Clyde for the past 22 years and so we know the “self-guided world” quite well. The purchase of the Ōmārama business would mean Trail Journeys could use its “people and equipment” more effectively. In doing business the company wanted to buy locally and showcase local food and wine. “We are very supportive of the region,” he said. Although autonomous, Trail Journeys was part of the World Expeditions Travel Group which meant it could “tap into” its client base around the world. “We get people who have Mt Cook on their bucket list and to add a bike ride to it makes it special.”

Because the business changed hands at the height of the season, apart from accommodation providers, he and other staff had not had much of an opportunity to “introduce ourselves” to the Ōmārama community. But they hoped to do that with a function sometime late April, early May. There were similarities between the Central Otago communities along the trails there and the communities along the Alps 2 Ocean Trail, Simon said. But there were important differences too. The company acknowledged the importance of community and in the past year gave sponsorship of about \$30,000 and \$40,000 to Clyde and Alexandra, and they looked to do similarly on this side of the Lindis.

Trail Journey's logistics manager Rebecca checks vehicles ahead of cyclists arriving at the Ōmārama depot.



Soaring dreams made good at camp

Young people who want to enter the world of gliding continue to enjoy mentorship, and adventure in Omarama under the adult wings of Youth Glide New Zealand's leaders.

In January, 15 young wannabe glider pilots aged between 15 and 20 from Christchurch, Queenstown, Cromwell, Dunedin and Twizel took to Omarama skies for the week long Youth Glide Soaring Development Camp.

While the annual event was always a good week this year strong winds had made things challenging, YGNZ director Roger Read said.

There were a couple of students who were close to taking their first solo flight but were not able to because of the conditions. But because as much, if not more, happens on the ground as in the air, instructors focussed on theory lessons in that time. The 15 students flew 65 hours with all progressing well and some achieving personal goals like soaring to 10,000 ft for the first time which also requires using oxygen. Going above the clouds and returning "fairly wide-eyed" having experienced that "wow factor", Roger said. There was great support for the week with six parents helping, another seven instructors and three winch drivers taking five gliders to the skies above the town.

This past long weekend Youth Glide hosted Winch over Waitangi at the airfield and 10 young people gathered for this event. For some they were consolidating their training and for others this was their first experience.

It was Rick(20) who had travelled the furthest. Rick first came to New Zealand from Takikawa, Hokkaido, Japan with his father when he was 13 going on 14-years-old in 2016 for a two-week camp. He loved it so much he has returned regularly since and fulfilled his dream of being a glider pilot. This was his fourth trip.

He was unable to return home during Covid and so stayed with the Roger and wife Kim which gave him opportunity to complete his instructor challenge theory while grounded.

Although Youth Glide usually has sufficient winch drivers at its weekend events there was still a need to train new volunteers who could operate the winch through the week when they were not there, Roger said.

Youth Glide New Zealand is a not-for-profit organisation that was founded in 2006 to help promote and support the sport of gliding among young people.



Airfield subdivision has lift off

After some delays Omarama Airfield Ltd's subdivision in Nimbus Dr has made it to market.

The company has appointed Gary Sutherland, Tall Poppy, as its sales agent.

Although it was "still early days" one section had sold and there had been good interest in the others, Gary said.

There are 12 sections in the Nimbus Dr subdivision adjacent to the airfield - eight at 700sqm and four at 1200sqm.

The market was not "overly active" at present, particularly with holiday home buyers, but he was optimistic it would change.

With the change in government some could be taking a 'wait and see' approach, he said.

Work began on the development at the end of last year with the completion date initially scheduled for November 2023 and the hope it could be ready for market in early December.

The subdivision is built on land owned by the airfield but not needed for airfield operations.

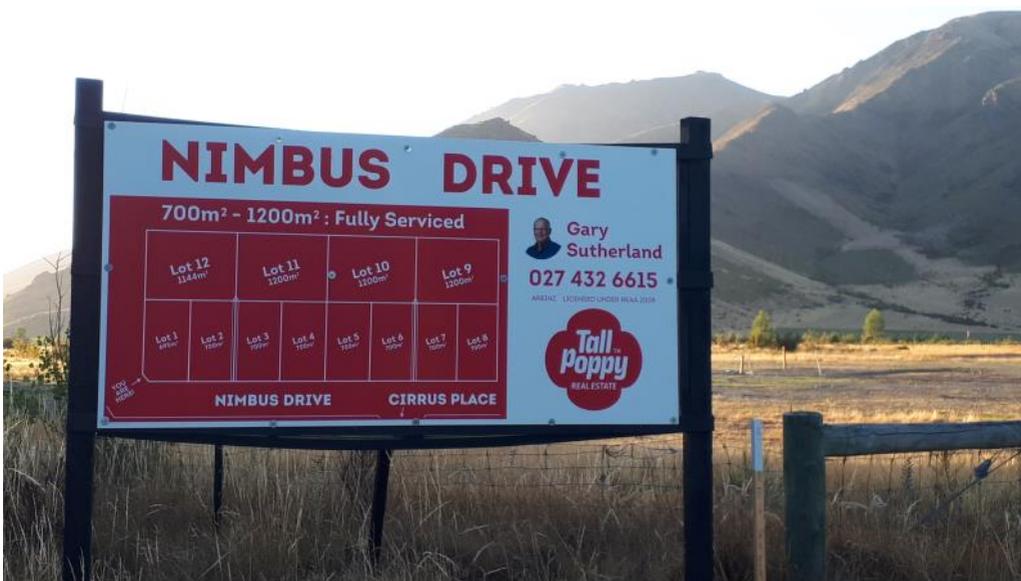
The company, which is a Waitaki District Council-controlled organisation, decided in 2021 to sell the land to build up reserves for future operations.

In October, the council decided to loan the company up to \$500,000 for the initial works to prepare the lots for sale with full repayment and interest required within two years.

At the time the company estimated the initial works would cost \$407,000.

It has said the proposed sale price of \$280,000 per lot should cover costs leaving about \$140,000 per settled lot to pay back the loan.

Covenants which include non-objection to airfield activities and development, and to protect the residential character of the development are entered on the titles and include a 6m height restriction.



The Noticeboard

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



In memoriam: Colourful gladioli are coming into bloom around Ōmārama in what is a fitting memorial tribute marking one year since the passing of Ōmārama legend Kevin Grant. Thanks to the generosity of Kevin and the family, corms of the prize-winning blooms were shared with keen gardeners in town.

Many happy returns to Cherie Perriam Shaw who celebrated her 50th Birthday in Ōmārama last month.

Congratulations to Nigel and Liz Burtenshaw on their recent marriage.

The Ōmārama Lamb sale is on February 15, 2024, at the Ōmārama Saleyards starting at 10am, followed by the the Ōmārama Ewe sale a week later.

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

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

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

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 '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 McKerchar 022 612 7570 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 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.

www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/
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 March Issue of the Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, March 6, 2024.**

Please submit copy
by Thursday, February 29, 2024

The Community Reports

Upper Waitaki Police News



Hi all,

It's been a few months since my last report.

I hope everyone had a good Christmas break? I managed to get the first three weeks of December off, returning to work on Christmas Day, what great luck that was!

Even worse was that I ended up having to attend a car crash at Lake Ōhau where a young French lady decided to drive off the road and hit a lamppost.

Thankfully, she was uninjured. The post and car not so much, which was very surprising considering she was only going 50Kmh (Tui ad).

While still there I was called away to help the Twizel boys out with a drunken clown that wanted to assault everyone, and then once he was arrested he decided to vomit everywhere and then roll around in it before Constable Jamie Reid and I transported him to Timaru. I've got a great photo of Jamie holding a bucket for the guy to yak in while he's in the back of our car! The Christmas period itself including Rodeo day and New Year's Eve were all pretty uneventful which was great.

January's another story altogether, I've attended a couple of minor car crashes, standard for this area, but also a serious crash on January 2 on State Highway 83 where a young family from Dunedin were travelling east near Prohibition Rd intersection and were crashed into by a westbound vehicle causing a head on collision. I'm sure you would've read about it in the news, four rescue helicopters and six patients taken to hospital, two of which were in serious condition and are still in a serious condition even now. Thankfully, all involved are going to survive, although getting over the trauma and rehabilitation is still going to take them some time.

Then, of course, there was the fatal car crash that I attended on January 25. This is nothing but tragic. A young 43-year-old father from Oamaru succumbed to his injuries at the scene. The two older tourists from the UK also suffered injuries, with the driver only just coming out of ICU in the last few days. Hopefully he will make a full recovery but at this stage it is too early to say. I can't comment too much on the cause of this crash as yet. It's unclear whether this was caused by a medical event, or distraction or fatigue or some other reason. I would point out the last two can easily be minimised just by using a bit of common sense. Something, I think we could all learn something from including myself, put the bloody cellphone down, and, if you're feeling tired, pull over and have a rest. If you're going on a long trip make sure you have decent night's sleep the night before.

Lastly I know the old rumour mill has been pretty busy around the arrest of a local man for a domestic incident I attended. I was disappointed to hear that there was rumour and speculation being posted on one of our local Facebook pages but

pleased to hear that this was quickly removed by Admin. As this is still going before the Court I'm unable to comment any further.

Lastly some person with a very small....IQ has been doing donuts at the Golf course. If anyone knows anything come and see me. I'll forever be in your debt. If the person responsible is reading this, you need to stop your putting yourself in harm's way.

So with those three fairly major files my typewriter is getting a battering and my stress levels are going up. Happy New Year everyone!! haha!

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>

Congratulations Gemma

New firefighter Gemma Patterson recently completed the rigorous recruit training course and passed with flying colours.

Gemma is a member of the Oamaru Volunteer Fire Brigade. However, her passion to serve community as a firefighter was lit at an open day at Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade in August 2022.

*Oamaru Deputy Chief Fire
Officer Peter Mason
congratulates Gemma
Patterson.*

*Photo: Oamaru Volunteer
Fire Brigade*



Otematata Volunteer Fire Brigade

A message of thanks to all from the Otematata brigade

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Our golf tournament on Saturday, February 3, was an amazing success.

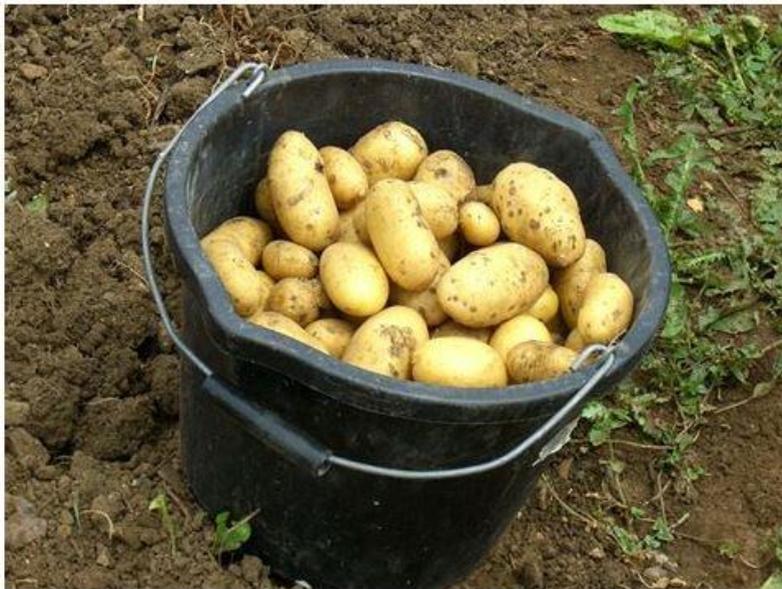
Special thanks to the Otematata Golf Club for the use of the course, our amazing sponsors (see the pic of the sponsors board for more details), our community helpers for food donations and helping with the barbecue tent and refreshments cart. Prizes were given to every participant, two spot prizes on the course, best dressed and numerous "lucky card" prizes.

The MEGA raffle had 20 awesome prizes and the ROMANCE raffle had two lucky winners.

Thanks to a couple of donors we were able to auction a cake and team shirts.

We are still collating any final costs, but are super stoked to announce we raised approx \$9000!! See you all next time.





Boots and Jandals Omarama Hotel Social Club, 'Spud in the Bucket' function including judging will be held, |

2.30pm Sunday, February 11, 2024.

FOC meal for social club members will be provided later in the day.

Hope to see you there for a fun-filled day.

Ōmārama Golf Club

In this year's challenge for the Lindis Shield - played between Omarama and Tarras golf clubs at Ōmārama - Tarras were once again victorious with a 32 average against Ōmārama's 30 stableford.

Tarras has won the past three challenges.

There was strong competition between the 17 entrants from Tarras against Ōmārama's 12 players in challenging conditions with gale force winds and dry conditions on the greens.

The day concluded with an enjoyable barbecue and catch up with colleagues over the pass.

If you are interested in joining email Arron Chambers, secretary@omaramagolfclub.co.nz for details.

Below: The Tarras team line up for a great feed in the Ōmārama club house.

Photo: Supplied



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 www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

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)

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

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 MenzShed

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

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

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
or secretary Olivia Black, 027 833 0869.

Ōmārama Community Library

The Ōmārama Community Library
is open 9.30am to 11am,
Wednesdays and Saturdays,
at the Ōmārama Community Centre.
omaramalibrary@gmail.com

Contact: Yvonne 027 476 7473

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

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

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 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

**Age Concern Coffee afternoons begin for 2024
on Tuesday, February 13, 2024
and continue 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

Omarama Collie Dog Club

Last month's annual meeting of the Ōmārama Collie Dog Club saw changes at the helm.

The club's new president is Hadlee Knight, vice president is Angus Fraser and Liz Greene takes over from Carla Hunter as secretary. Andrea Aubrey will continue as treasurer.

**The Ōmārama Collie Dog Club Trials
will be March 2 and 3, 2024
at the club trial grounds Dalrachney Station
2180 Ōmārama/Tarras Rd, Lindis Hwy, Ōmārama 9412
Entries close 10am second day**

Secretary:

Carla Hunter smithyc66@gmail.com

Phone: 027 573 0175

03 438 9780

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

**Contributions are welcome.
omaramagazette@gmail.com**

Get your environmental project off the ground

Apply for support from the Upper Waitaki Action Plan budget.

If you've got an idea for a project that will help improve water quality, enhance biodiversity, or engage the community on environmental issues - we might be able to help.

The Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee makes recommendations to Environment Canterbury about how to allocate \$75,000 each year to help implement the committee's Canterbury Water Management Strategy Action Plan, and improve our lakes and rivers in the area.

Previous projects the zone committee has supported include native plantings to enhance a walk/cycle trail in the Lake Takapō/Tekapo area, and a soil moisture monitoring pilot project in Ōmarama.

Email Murray Griffin to apply - murray.griffin@ecan.govt.nz

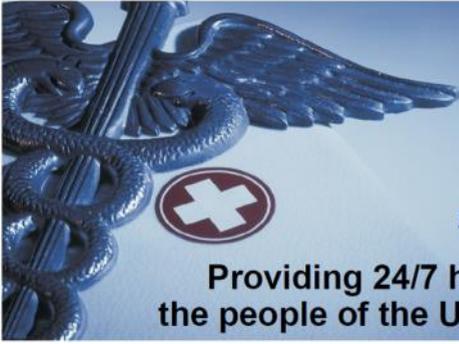
Find out more at ecan.govt.nz/south-zones

The Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee is made up of representatives from the community, Rūnanga and Councils.



HERE'S A PROJECT WE'RE ALREADY SUPPORTING

The Ohau Conservation Trust has received more than \$23,000 from Action Plan funding to help control pest plants at Lake Ohau and Lake Middleton.



Kurow Medical Centre

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

E: info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz
W: www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz
www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre

**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

Sun Safety

With summer in full swing and our stunning landscapes providing a haven for outdoor lifestyle and adventures, an increase in exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation can cause skin cancer. New Zealand has the highest rate in the world of melanoma, the most serious of skin cancers, with over 6,000 cases each year and around 300 deaths. As the third most common cancer in men and fourth in women, around 70% of melanoma cases occur in people aged 50 years and older, however UV skin damage earlier in life increases risk. Occurring anywhere on the body, including areas not exposed to the sun, melanoma is more common on sun-exposed areas like the head, face, neck, arms, and legs. The risk of skin damage is higher when the ultraviolet index (UVI) is 3 or above, from September to April, especially between 10am and 4pm and on a boat or at the lake or beach, as reflections from water and sand can increase UV reflection. High altitudes, especially near snow, which strongly reflects UV reflection also increases risk. For real time UVI readings in your area see www.niwa.co.nz. Melanoma is almost always preventable but relies on us to take the following steps to protect ourselves:

SLIP on long-sleeved shirts with collars, as well as long pants.

SLOP - the NZ Dermatological Society recommends SPF50 sunscreen or higher.

Apply 20 minutes before going outside and reapply every 2 hours with a two-coat approach.

SLAP on a broad-brimmed hat with at least a 7.5cm brim, remembering that caps do not protect the neck, ears, or side of the face.

SEEK SHADE and schedule outdoor activities for times of the day with the least UV radiation. Use an umbrella or a portable shade.

SLIDE on some close-fitting sunglasses that don't let the sun rays into the side of your frames. Polarised glasses help, particularly with UV reflection from concrete, water, and snow.

While prevention is key, early detection, diagnosis and management can result in better outcomes, which is why it is important to KNOW YOUR SKIN. Once every three months, check your entire body, including skin not normally exposed to the sun and ask for help from someone else to check difficult-to-see areas. The "Ugly Duckling Rule" can help. As you compare your moles, if one stands out or looks different from that of nearby moles - it is the ugly duckling. If you find anything of concern or are unsure, seek medical advice.

Dr Tim Gardner is a General Practitioner with a Special Interest (GPSI) in the management and surgical removal of skin lesions. Certain cases are eligible for funding making the surgery and follow up care free, while others will incur a fee. Appointments are available in Twizel, Ōmārama and Kurow. You can find out more about skin cancer at www.cancer.org.nz/cancer/types-of-cancer/skin-cancer

Meningococcal Vaccination

A new term is underway and now is a good time to check up on vaccination status. Vaccines against meningococcal group B and groups A, C, Y and W (meningitis) are free for at risk people including those aged 13–25 years who are living in a boarding school hostel or university hall of residence. These can be given by your Practice Nurse. For more information visit www.immunise.health.nz/when-to-immunise/teenagers-young-adults



**WASTE
FREE**
WAITAKI

Every year New Zealanders generate 17 million tonnes of waste and we send 13 million tonnes of it to landfill.

When we don't manage waste creation or disposal as well as we could, it costs us and our environment. It can have impacts on public health, as well as create challenges for future generations.



**Talk to us
in person,
ask us
questions
and find
out more**

AHURIRI DROP-IN SESSIONS

**Kurow
Community Hall**
Wed 14 Feb,
5pm - 6pm

**Ōmārama
Community Centre**
Thurs 15 Feb,
5pm - 6pm

**Otematata
Community Centre**
Thurs 15 Feb,
7pm - 8pm

**Let's
talk
trash**

We have an opportunity to step it up when it comes to how we create and deal with waste in Waitaki.

**Feedback on our draft
Waste Minimisation
and Management Plan
is OPEN NOW and runs
until 1 March 2024.**

Print copies of our 'Waste Free Waitaki' Consultation Document with feedback form are available from Council offices and Waitaki District Libraries.

You can find all the information and supporting documents including the online feedback form at:

www.letstalk.waitaki.govt.nz/WMMP



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- * Do take photo identification
- * Remember to take the original as well as the copy to be certified
- * Check that a New Zealand Justice of the Peace can complete your documentation



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Omarama

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Vicky Munro
Otematata

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Alona Shaw
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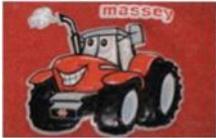


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TARGETED WEED CONTROL PROGRAMME



From early February we will be using helicopters for aerial spraying of targeted weeds on rivers across the region including the Rangitata, Ōrāri, Ōpihi, Ōpūha, Pareora and Lower Waitaki rivers.

Weed control clears the active part of the river channel that carries fast flowing water during floods and protects biodiversity.

The riverbeds will be surveyed, and only targeted weeds will be sprayed.

For more information, visit ecan.govt.nz/current-works or call us on **0800 324 636**.



EP090353

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.



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0800 RURAL HELP (0800 787 254)

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

January 2024

Highest temperature: January 12, 31.5C

Lowest temperature: January 24, 2.3C

Most rainfall: January 23, 25.9 mm

Total rainfall for January: 71.1mm

(The most rainfall recorded for a single month since May 2023)

The Ōmārama Gazette

Ōmārama's news delivered to your inbox

the first Wednesday of each month

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