

# NEWS FROM YOUR WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCILLOR



**The new Council will be sworn in on 27 October**, including six new Councillors. Stephenie Henderson (Awaroa ki Tuakau Ward), Frank McNally (Huntly Ward), Eugene Patterson (Ngaruawahia Ward), Bronwyn Main (Onewhero-Te Akau Ward) Aksel Bech, who stood for election as Aksel Jepsen Bech, (Tamahere Ward) and Lisa Thompson (Raglan Ward). All but one sitting Councillor were returned. Moera Solomon from Ngaruawahia Ward lost her seat – I will miss her wise counsel. Moera has been a real asset to the District Council especially with her local knowledge and ties to Tainui.

I have always been an advocate for a commuter rail/bus service between Tuakau/Pokeno and Auckland and eventually a daily rail service between Hamilton and Auckland. I note the Minister of Transport is now supporting the concept although he says this will not happen overnight. The new Deputy Mayor of Auckland Bill Cashmore, who lives in the Franklin district, has made his support of extending rail electrification through to Pukekohe and beyond very clear so I am confident the push for improved public transport for the north of our district will gain momentum over the next decade.

I mentioned in an earlier newsletter that Council's **grass verge policy** would change. From 1 October we implemented this policy in urban areas (50kph) to make mowing of verges the responsibility of the adjacent landowner. This will impact on the villages in the Eureka Ward. Up until now we have maintained over 670 individual grass verges across the district with no formal process in place to determine which verges got mown and which didn't. We now have consistency about managing this across the district. Anyone who feels they should be exempt from mowing their verge because of age, illness or the condition of the grass verge can apply for an exemption by 28 October. Those who qualify will have their verge mown at least four times a year. Ring council for a form or visit our website.

You may have noted that Central Government has passed legislation to allow Councils to develop a **policy to allow shops to open on Easter Sunday**. We are surveying our residents for their opinion on this policy. Let us know what you think by 31 October. Have your say via our website [www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/sayit](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/sayit) or let me know your thoughts on this matter. Thank you to those groups who have already given me feedback.

You have probably read in the press about the **Healthy River plan change for Waikato and Waipa Rivers**. This has naturally caused a great deal of tension amongst farmers, particularly hill country farmers. The plan was officially notified by Waikato Regional Council (WRC) on 22 October and around 100,000 letters are being sent to ratepayers in Waikato and Waipa to advise them of the notification. There will be 80 working days from that date for farmers and interest groups to make submissions before the closing date in early March. The websites of DairyNZ, Federated Farmers, WRC and others will have more information for you to peruse. A meeting, organised by DairyNZ, is being held at Gordonton Hall at 7:30pm on Thursday 3 November to discuss how this plan change may affect dairy farmers. Details of other meetings are on the DairyNZ website.

**Avantidrome** put out a regular newsletter with the latest news on events and programmes at the facility. I note they run cycling specific pilate classes every Tuesday from 5:30 – 6:30pm which help a cyclist become a more efficient rider. You can also book a Christmas event in their function rooms including a ride on the track. Check their Facebook page or website [www.avantidrome.co.nz](http://www.avantidrome.co.nz) for more information. You can also sign up to their newsletter for regular updates.

## **The Hamilton Section of the Expressway is starting to take shape.**

Archaeologists from Opus have been unearthing some interesting finds as part of the preliminary work on the Hamilton section. Archaeological digs have taken place at Matangi, Tamahere and near Lake Road. Tamahere's early farming history was uncovered in their excavation work within the planned route near Matangi. The foundation remains of a number of buildings used for housing and farm activity were found.

- From Lake Road, a haul road for earthmoving extends south. This month it will reach and cross Osborne Road in Horsham Downs. Traffic lights and barrier arms will be installed
- Kay Road is now closed to through traffic for bridge construction, which will take approximately 13 months.
- At Gordonton Road, work will start on 7 November with bridge construction to begin in December.
- At Ruakura Road, construction of the rail overbridge will begin in November.
- At Morrinsville Road (SH26), bridge construction will begin in December/January.

### **(RUAKURA INTERCHANGE)**

As part of the restructure of the district's solid waste and recycling policy we undertook to change how we operate the **inorganic collection**. From early 2017, when the new service begins, you will no longer have to leave your inorganic refuse on the roadside but will be able to book a collection via a phone-in service and items will be collected from your property – there will be no charge to book. **Note: There will be no inorganic collection this year** so please do not place anything on your roadside as this will be considered "illegal dumping". You will receive more information from Council with details of the new service in due course with the dates for collection. See [www.lesswastesavesmore.co.nz](http://www.lesswastesavesmore.co.nz) for more information.

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