

NEWS FROM YOUR WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

On 4th July I accompanied several other Councillors and Waikato District Council (WDC) staff members to Springhill Prison for the launch of the 30 'little libraries' that are to be distributed to small communities across the Waikato including Eureka, Puketaha, Tauwhare and Matangi in Eureka Ward. These libraries were built and decorated by prisoners at Springhill. Assistant Prison Director Christine Faull said "We welcome opportunities that allow prisoners to develop their skills and contribute back to their community. Interesting local projects such as this help set prisoners on a path to reintegrating with the community after their release."



Each library holds 20-30 books that can be borrowed or exchanged and local residents will keep them stocked. They will be installed in an easily accessible site during the next month.

Over the last two decades we have had an arrangement with Hamilton City Council (HCC) to provide a free library service for all our residents which has worked very well. WDC has been paying HCC \$300k a year for this service, (a reduction of the initial arrangement of \$500k) and WDC has decided that this agreement will come to an end at the end of September 2018.

Some of our residents don't live nearby to one of our WDC libraries and we know that they are therefore more likely to use libraries run by other councils. For this reason, people living in the areas near to Hamilton will receive one free 12-month membership voucher per household to use Hamilton City Libraries. They will receive this voucher from WDC, in the mail, in early August.

I am personally very disappointed with the changes because I believe we got good value for money. Note, the existing arrangement with Matamata Piako District to use the Morrinsville library is unchanged; we also pay \$14,000 to Waipa District Council to allow our residents free use of the Cambridge library and this is also unchanged.

A letter is being sent by WDC to current/active library users in early August with details of the new arrangements. After you receive this letter, if you wish to provide feedback on the new arrangement, please email our CEO Gavin Ion at gavin.ion@waic.govt.nz with your comments.

You may recall you received a new property valuation in 2017. If your property increased in value note that Council does not collect more rating income as a result of an increase in values but it does affect the distribution of rates between ratepayers and that means some ratepayers will pay more. Your rates depend on what type of property you have e.g. residential, rural, commercial. We consulted residents about our Long-Term Plan and this has now been adopted. The consultation document gave details of significant rates increases. The June edition of our Council newsletter, *Link*, gives details of where your rates are used. The first rates notice for this financial year will go out in August. You can check your property rates at www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/rid

The **Expressway** work continues. This year the contractors have approval to continue the earthworks during the winter months, but the weather dictates how much work can be done. At this stage work on the Longswamp section is likely to be completed by mid-2019; the Hamilton Section the third quarter of 2020.

The Greenhill Interchange will link the Expressway with Wairere Drive and beams have now been placed on the interchange bridge with the team now preparing to pour the concrete deck. This interchange will link via Pardo Drive to the Wairere Drive/Gordonton Rd roundabout. The new roundabout at the intersection of SH26 and Ruakura Rd is now sealed – this roundabout is constructed with very deep bitumen to resist the pressure of heavy vehicles. Once this work is completed Ruakura Rd will be finished and sealed through to Vaile Road.

WDC staff are gradually working their way through a few technical difficulties to complete stage 1 of the online **Proposed District Plan**. www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/districtplan A PDF version of the Plan is now available for viewing with the ePlan to follow. A PDF version of planning maps is also available for viewing and the Property Search function should now be online. Submission forms are now at all Council libraries and service centres and an electronic version can be downloaded off the Council website. Submissions close on 9 October. A letter with all this information has been posted out to ratepayers this week.



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