

YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Gisborne District Council is a unitary authority. This means as well as looking after the infrastructure needs of our district we are also guardians of our local environment; a role carried out by a regional authority in other parts of New Zealand.

“So what have we done in the last year to make your environment better?”

Helping to stabilise our eroding hill country

Council has previously assessed this district's most erosion-prone land and is now working with landowners providing free advice and help to put together tree establishment plans. The aim is to conserve soil and reduce the amount of silt downstream by establishing trees to make this land stable into the future. Known as the Sustainable Hill Country Project, considerable progress has been made across the district as landowners and staff have worked together to identify the best option to establish trees. Rules require that some of the most erosion prone land is covered by trees and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry funded East Coast forestry project is able to help with generous tree establishment grants.

Update on climate change impacts

An update to the 2006 Overview of Climate Change was commissioned by Council. The report is freely available from www.gdc.govt.nz. It helps landowners and the community understand the science of climate change and how it may affect their patch. It covers expected changes in the district's temperature and rainfall, new developments in legislation and how an Emissions Trading Scheme may affect the district.

During the year, parties with irrigation takes on the Poverty Bay Flats met with Council staff at the

Bushmere Arms to discuss the latest government initiatives on freshwater management. Possible impacts of two National Environment Standards (NES), focusing on water metering devices; and ecological flows and water levels; along with the wider implications of the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management were discussed. Council staff outlined initiatives available to Council to assist the management of local freshwater resources to Council's, the community and environments advantage. Ongoing meetings to report on progress will be necessary.

Using organic fertiliser on Waipaoa stop banks

Council has been thinking about the long term health of our waterways and has started using organic fertiliser on the stopbanks flanking the Waipaoa flood protection scheme. We have had good results and landowners in this area have noticed an improvement in water quality.

Educated about the environment

Council has been helping our community do their bit to conserve resources. Activities include eDay where a whopping 52 tonnes of computer waste was salvaged from your homes. To raise awareness about sustainable communities Council commemorated Earth Hour, World Environment Day and helped six schools become enviroschools. We continued our longstanding relationship with the Ilminster Intermediate Green Team. These clever kids put on 16 performances to 19 schools spreading the green message and building pride in Gisborne. There was a noticeable increase in the number of organisations involved in rubbish pick ups. All this activity resulted in Anne Lister, our Environmental Educator, being awarded the Chairman's Excellence Award at the Keep New Zealand Beautiful Conference.



More homes in Gisborne district are healthy

Gisborne district now has at least 200 more homes that are warmer and drier thanks to the ECT Healthy Homes project. Community Services Card holders have been eligible to get free ceiling and underfloor insulation, hot water cylinder wrapping and protection against draughts. The Government has now extended the Energy Wise scheme to provide a subsidy to all those who own homes built before 2000.

Coastal hazard zones for Tokomaru Bay

Landowners in Tokomaru Bay can now have some certainty about what is suitable land use in the area. Tokomaru Bay is an area that faces serious risks from sea erosion and land slips. This was acknowledged in changes that were made to the Council's District Plan and Coastal Environment Plan. The changes restrict the use of 'at risk' land and ensure that any use is sustainable in the long term.

Te Wherowhero Lagoon ecological restoration

Te Wherowhero Lagoon at the base of Te Kuri a Paoa (Young Nick's Head), once hosted a thriving community of Māori, who depended largely on the lagoon for much of their food. Fifty years of neglect, sediment from surrounding hills and rubbish dumping have left it in a poor state. Council has been working with a small group of committed people including Department of Conservation, landowners, QEII Trust members, Tangata Whenua (Ngai Tamanuhiri) and obtained funding from the Biodiversity Condition Fund to restore the ecology of the lagoon and encourage native wildlife. A "Working with Wetlands" booklet was produced in conjunction with the Hawkes Bay Regional Council to help landowners to restore the ecology of their wet land and waterways.

Unwanted plants identified and destroyed

Garden plants that are known to spread and be very difficult to eradicate are not wanted here! Council's Plant and Pest Officers inspected the eighteen local garden plant outlets looking for plants banned by Biodsecurity NZ from propagation or sale. Two such plant species were found and destroyed.

Harvesting plantation forest on unstable land

Many of the district's exotic forests have been planted on very unstable land. The land remains very erosion prone, especially during and immediately following harvesting. To protect these fragile environments harvesting operations involving 3,280ha of clear felling and 101km of roads and tracks had site specific conditions included in their resource consents.

Keeping unwanted rooks at bay

While the majority of animal pest management funds are spent on possum control, rooks (crows) are accorded high priority animal pest in Council's Pest Management Strategy. There are only a few in the district and are controllable. If they established in this region they would pose a significant threat to our seed crops and they are a pest on farmland scratching through topsoil. They tend to drift northwards from the Wairoa district. That was the case this year when one active nesting site was found in the south of the district. Specialised poisoning killed 76% of the birds. The balance will be re-targeted during the 2009 nesting season.

Poverty Bay underground water supplies not over-used

The Makauri aquifer is used extensively for irrigating horticulture crops in summer. Water levels were monitored and usage managed by issuing water permits. This ensured that levels were back to normal by the start of the 2008/09 irrigation season.



YOUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

In 2006 Council resolved to work with nine communities over three years to capture each community's vision for their place. Last year Council worked with Te Karaka, Patutahi and Ruatoria to develop township plans. These plans will guide Council in planning for future development over the next 20 years. The success of each plan depends on Council working with local communities and other organisations. Council is holding regular meetings with these communities.

"So what has been happening in your place?"

Planting and skating in Patutahi

Patutahi has finalised its plan and is now putting it into action. Council has helped the community with funding through grants for a variety of projects. The skate ramp in Patutahi Park was launched in the company of 90 kids who turned up to try out the new ramp. A community garden has been established with the help of a Tairāwhiti Polytechnic course and fencing donated by a local farmer. A community Christmas party brought 150 locals together to celebrate a successful year.

Te Araroa spruce up

It has been all go in Te Araroa after the community requested a main street upgrade. New street lights have been erected, a new footpath of pavers and asphalt lines the eastern side of the main road and litter bins have been installed. A new toilet block in Te Araroa is next on the list.

Tikitiki transfer station

Tikitiki residents are going green. The old burn pit is gone and a new transfer station was opened. Residents can now recycle and deposit their rubbish in a safe, secure and environmental friendly facility.

Te Karaka and Whatatutu drinking water

Te Karaka and Whatatutu are on track to get upgraded drinking water supplies. Council has produced Public Health Risk Management Plans which identify risks to the water supply in these communities. These plans have been submitted to the Ministry of Health's National Drinking Water Assessors. If the plans are approved Council will apply for government funding to upgrade those water supplies to meet new national standards.

Ruatoria community joining forces

Council, government agencies and two Ruatoria based trusts – He Oranga mo Nga Uri Tuko Iho and Te Puawaitanga o Ruatorea have joined forces to form an action group to coordinate local resources. Together we are looking at issues from erosion control through to employment. Protecting Ruatoria from a major flood is the immediate focus, with an overall catchment management plan as a longer term goal. The group will also coordinate the implementation of the township plan.

To keep the stock and their effluent out of Ruatoria, Council has purchased an area of land between the township and the river as a stock route. This land has potential for other community uses.

Positive Ageing strategy

The Tairāwhiti Positive Ageing Strategy was launched last year by the Hon Darren Hughes (Associate Minister for Social Development). This strategy has been instrumental in getting all agencies and groups providing services for our older people working together. One outcome of the strategy was a Positive Ageing Expo held in October. It brought 35 stall holders together with some great entertainment and attracted 1,500 visitors.



Live on the Lawn Concert series

Council continued to offer free family concerts last summer. On average 450 – 800 people of all ages attended the seven concerts with music ranging from 1970s classic rock to 1930s jazz.

LISTENING TO YOU

To ensure we are providing the goods and services our community needs we are committed to involving you and listening to you as part of our decision making processes.

“So how did we do this?”

Gisborne and district 2019

Council's plan for the next ten years has been adopted by Council. Prior to this nearly 24 months of work went on behind the scenes. Strategies were aligned, affected parties asked to put forward ideas and finally a draft plan was written. A summary of the plan went out to all residents and ratepayers for comment. More than 400 people sent in submissions telling us what they thought of the plan. The Mayor, Councillors and staff presented our draft plan to 250 people at the meetings of 13 community organisations and spoke to another 200 people at 20 public meetings in the city and townships. Many significant changes were made to the final Ten Year Plan as a result of feedback and submissions made during the consultation process. These included a reduction in the level of rate increase, cutting wastewater reticulation at Makaraka and a mobile library service from the plan and adding in improvements to the Waipaoa Flood protection scheme. The summary of the plan made the top five in a competition run by Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) and the consultation process was in the top three at SOLGM's Communication's forum.

Cycling advisory group

After an approach was made to Council by an informal group of cycling enthusiasts the Cycling Advisory group was formed in March 2009. The group wants our district to be a place where people choose to cycle and where people come to cycle. The advisory group will review and monitor Council's walking and cycling strategy. They are also looking at initiatives to improve cycle safety and educate road users. The willingness of all parties to help Gisborne become a cycle friendly city means that this is more likely to happen.

Your Council online

To make it easy to interact with Council a new website - www.gdc.govt.nz - was launched in March. The old site could not be searched and had limited capability to interact with you our customers. Those who are doing their family tree can now search our cemetery records online. You can check out what rates you are paying now compared to last year and make submissions and requests for service online. The site proved its worth in the recent floods when over two days 3,500 people visited the site to check out the latest news, road conditions and the river levels which were updated each hour. The new site was awarded the Best Redevelopment Website (People's Choice) at the 2009 Association of Local Government Information Managers Conference.

Your Council's logo

Council rectified its dated branding this year by refreshing and relaunching its logo. Research identified the sun and squiggle, rather than the traditional crest, was the logo that best identified Gisborne District Council. However the logo looked dated, lacked any cultural reference and the colours were used inconsistently.



These concerns were addressed with the sun and squiggle being refreshed by local designer Rees Morley. A Branding and Style Guide has been produced along with templates for many of the reports and other documents Council produces. These templates mean Council can produce documents more efficiently and all materials carrying our refreshed brand now look professional and consistent.

Waru-Haisman

Haphazard development in the Waru-Haisman area over the past 20 years has resulted in ongoing ponding and drainage problems for many residents. A proposal to increase housing density by reducing the minimum lot size from 1 hectare to 0.5 hectares threatened to add to this problem and divided opinion. A compromise position was reached and a small area known as Glenelg Corner was rezoned to allow for a minimum lot size of 0.5 hectares. This was approved by Council in October 2008. This area suffers least from drainage and ponding problems and enables residents who requested the change to subdivide their land.

THE FINANCES

The last year has seen the local, national and international economy retrench. Our response is to ensure that we are prudently spending your money on essential services that keep this district humming.

"As tough economic times start to bite what has Council done to ease the rates burden?"

Paying for new developments

Development contributions were introduced this year to reduce the pressure on rates. Land developers are now required to fund the cost of growth created by their development.

This could include parks and reserves, roads, water supply, wastewater, or stormwater management. By contributing to some of Council's infrastructure costs better quality developments will be built without hefty rate increases.

Spending less on a wastewater treatment plant

At the beginning of the year Council was looking at an \$84M bill to build a new wastewater treatment plant. A lot of work went into looking at ways to reduce that cost while still building a plant that was socially, culturally and environmentally effective. Eventually Council and the Wastewater Options Review Group decided on three options that were presented to the community for feedback. Council decided unanimously to build a reduced scope plant in Banks Street by 2010. Savings to the community; approximately \$40M.

Rate increase not so bad

Council is actively looking for ways to eliminate wastage. Aware the burden of rates is very difficult for some people in these tough economic times, Council staff have committed to taking \$1M out of Council's operating budget. Already \$216,000 has been saved on the cost of Council's insurance by joining a Bay of Plenty Councils' shared services arrangement. This is just one of the initiatives adopted to drive down the level of rate increases. Other initiatives include reducing the amount of money we are saving for the new wastewater treatment plant and delaying all 'nice-to-have' projects until the economy has picked up.

Save \$550 off your rates bill

Council processed 1,820 rate rebates this year worth \$909,876. These were processed on behalf of the Department of Internal Affairs.



For those on lower incomes this is an easy way to get up to \$550 off their annual rate bill. We have been actively informing ratepayers about the rebate and how to apply for it. Information and application forms were sent with rates invoices to capture as many eligible ratepayers as possible.

Easy pay the easy way to pay rates

In addition to quarterly payments ratepayers can now pay their rates weekly, fortnightly or monthly by direct debit. More than \$3.25 million dollars worth of rates were paid by direct debit last instalment; that's about 28% of our total annual rates. Many are choosing the easy pay scheme because payments are spread evenly over the year and can better coincide with paydays. It also eliminates the chance of getting behind in rates payments and incurring a penalty. If the rates increase then the repayments will be automatically adjusted.

Revaluing your property

The Gisborne district was revalued for rating purposes during the year and most ratepayers seem happy with their new property valuations. Very few objected (fewer than 300) which is down from 1,900 last time the district was valued. All objections were reviewed by a valuer and a decision on the property value was agreed to. No objections needed to be referred to the Land Valuation Tribunal for settlement.

Community funders' forum

Many of the projects that our community wants are unaffordable for the Council to pay for through rates. There are several organisations in our community that have funding available for projects. Last year the first funders' forum was held. Information was provided to funding organisations about the projects that the community has said it would like the Council to initiate but that we really can't afford. The funders

appreciated this as it gives them a chance to see which projects align with their funding criteria and to plan long term. Several projects and organisations look like being a good fit. This means our district may get some 'nice-to-have' facilities that might not be viable otherwise.

OPEN SPACES

Our district's mild climate and abundance of open spaces are important to our relaxed lifestyle.

"So what did Council do to enhance those spaces so we can all enjoy them?"

We love walking and cycling

One of Council's most popular projects last year was extending the city walkway along the Turanganui riverbank. The path was designed to accommodate cyclists and walkers together. Down by the Waikanae creek a large koru pattern has been incorporated into the paving. At Watties wharf, which is always popular for fishing, wooden decking and seating have been used. Extension of the walkways was the project most people supported during the recent Ten Year Plan consultation. A change in funding by New Zealand Transport Agency may mean these projects can't proceed. We will work on getting funding reinstated.

Improving our sports fields

Two senior sized soccer fields were created after levelling the ground and replanting the turf at Watson Park. The project was completed using Gisborne based contractors and suppliers and the two fields were available for play by the start of the soccer season. Although located over an old landfill, these soccer fields bring a total of three all-weather fields that are of a standard that can accommodate senior level football matches.



As this ground is sand-based and very well drained, matches can now be relocated to Watson Park from other Gisborne soccer grounds that may be closed by wet weather. Two soccer fields were drained at Nelson Park. The toilets at Heath Johnston and Wainui Reserves were upgraded and showers installed. A new grandstand was built at Tokomaru Bay.

Upgrading play equipment

We haven't forgotten the children of our district. Many of the playgrounds in our district have had some attention during the last year. Abbott Street Reserve, the Adventure Playground, Ayton Park, Waikanae Beach Reserve, Lysnar Reserve and Anzac Park have all had new swings installed and the safety surface under the equipment upgraded.

Parks to play in

Titirangi Reserve, (also known as Kaiti Hill) the iconic maunga (hill) on the edge of Gisborne city is one of the first places visitors to the district head for. This year we continued to remove exotic trees and noxious plants and replace with native plantings. Council will continue to enhance this site for the many residents and tourists who enjoy this special place every day.

Other well used open spaces are inner Kaiti's Anzac Park and Wainui's Lysnar Reserve both of which now have plans to guide future enhancements. This year Council installed new outdoor furniture and playgrounds at these parks as well as upgrading the stairs and car parking facilities.

Pacific rim theme for Botanical Gardens

Hundreds of people told us how they would like to see this popular area developed in the future and now Council has developed a plan describing how this will be done. The Botanical Gardens is one of

Gisborne's destination playgrounds and will get some exciting new play equipment installed in the next year. The free flying aviary is one of only a few left in parks around New Zealand and it will be maintained and the collection of birds enhanced. Future plantings will take into account our Pacific rim location. Labelling and signage will be updated to enhance people's awareness and appreciation of the plants.

FACILITIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Council maintains a number of facilities to help keep our communities connected, healthy, vibrant and accessible to all.

"So how did these facilities improve our district's lifestyle?"

Olympic pool

Our pool had more use last year than ever before; a record 158,034 visits in fact. Full PoolSafe accreditation was achieved. This sets industry standards so people can have confidence in the way our facility is run. It helped us identify and minimise any risks. This resulted in no serious accidents occurring at the pool. Security has been stepped up and any inappropriate behaviour dealt with promptly to ensure nothing gets in the way of customers enjoying our facility.

Museum and Art Gallery

Council recognises that the Tairāwhiti Museum and Art Gallery is the district's foremost repository for arts and heritage collections for present and future generations. It is also one of the country's premier regional museums. With the assistance of Council funding, the Museum achieved a number of firsts in 2008/9 including the opening of the regional history exhibition Watersheds: Ngā Waipupū.



This is the largest exhibition project of its type undertaken for many years. The Museum also hosted the Museums Aotearoa National Conference that drew 120 participants from around New Zealand and overseas. Looking ahead, the Council will continue to work with the Museum on a feasibility study to solve storage issues and support the Museum and Nga Taonga a Nga Tama Toa Trust in creating a new gallery for the C Company (28th Māori Battalion) 'Price of Citizenship' exhibition.

Theatres

The Lawson Field, War Memorial and Outdoor Theatre provide venues for touring groups and artists. By working with promoters the number of touring groups who visited our district, used our theatres and entertained us increased.

H B Williams Memorial Library

Last year our library worked with Wairoa and Central Hawkes Bay districts to complete an East Coast application to Government to fund computers, broadband and wifi. The application was successful. Live now for 10 months, the Aotearoa People's Network means anyone in our community can now access broadband internet for free and at no cost to the ratepayer. The majority of users are teenagers who use the service for social networking and mail. An increasing number of people are using the service to apply for jobs and courses, create CVs, and undertake course work and general research. The free wifi connection is used by customers who bring their own computers to the library. Over 200 people a month come in to use their own computer.

Community House

Good progress has been made towards establishing a Community House. This would be a place where small-medium support agencies can connect and

provide information on what services are available in our community. This would avoid people running from place to place to get information. A trust deed has been registered and a professional fundraiser appointed to raise an estimated \$1.1M. This amount is needed to purchase and renovate the identified building.

Mobility car parks

The community raised concerns about the number of people using mobility car parks who were not displaying a mobility sticker. Rather than our parking wardens writing out more enforcement notices a different approach was used. The mobility car parks were painted a bright distinctive blue. This simple approach was welcomed by users of the car parks and CCS Disability Action who gave us an award for making mobility parking spaces highly visible across the city. Television programme Fair Go also commended the idea.

YOUR SAFETY

Many of Council's activities are about keeping our residents safe on the roads and from natural disasters.

"How did we do this last year?"

Fighting rural fires

Our long hot summer kept the district's rural fire force very busy attending more than 100 call outs in February. Often several fires ignited simultaneously which meant that the Council's Response Coordinator needed to call on all volunteers throughout the district. Rene Londeman was appointed to replace outgoing Principal Rural Fire Officer Don Scott and five of our valued volunteers achieved National Certificate level qualifications. Unfortunately one of our most experienced volunteers paid the ultimate price for service to his community.



Tribute to Ray Barrett

Ray Barrett, a Hicks Bay volunteer Rural Fire Fighter lost his life near Potaka on the way to a motor vehicle accident last year. A NZ Fire Service Long Service and Good Conduct Medal was awarded posthumously and presented to his family at a community commemoration. A new fire truck for use by the Hicks Bay Rural Fire Service was dedicated to Mr Barrett in recognition of his unflinching support of the rural fire service. The new fire truck replaces the one lost last year. Costing \$145,000, it is jointly funded by the Gisborne District Council and the National Rural Fire Authority.

Keeping you safe on the roads

The Gisborne district has 1,826km of roads (not including state highways) and the Council is responsible for keeping these roads open and accessible. This is a difficult job as we have more roads per head of population than any other district and 60% of them are unsealed. Our terrain is unstable and we are having an increasing number of heavy rain events. Despite these challenges 74 kilometres of roads were resealed, 16 kilometres improved and approximately 500 slips cleared including 150 major ones. All this work is done to keep our roads safe and traffic flowing.

Road Safety Action Group

Working to find solutions to keep our district's roads safer is the Road Safety Action Group. It is a joint committee of Council, Police, Land Transport NZ (state highways), ACC and the trucking industry.

Waimata Valley Road

Waimata Valley Road users have been battling continuous potholes as logging vehicles heading for the port have increased.

Council spent \$2.2M to fix the 6km of road that was sealed last year. Sealing the final 7km of the road will be completed this year.

Diverting logging vehicles

The movement of logging vehicles around Gisborne Port has been improved with the construction of Rakaiatane Road. This \$6M project was funded by the New Zealand Transport Agency, Eastland Group and Gisborne District Council. Now that logging vehicles are diverted to Rakaiatane Road, opportunities to further develop the inner harbour are being discussed.

Protecting Ruatoria from flood

A whole-of-catchment approach is being taken to minimise the risk the Ruatoria community faces from flooding. Council has been working with He Oranga mo Nga Uri Tuko Iho and Te Puawaitanga o Ruatorea trusts over the last year to look at issues from erosion control through to employment, with flood protection works the immediate focus. A trial has been conducted to divert the river bed back to where it was before Cyclone Bola.

The idea is to use local labour and river shingle to construct structures that would support each other and the banks of the Waiapu. This river is eroding at a rapid rate on the town side of Ruatoria. Work is expected to start in the next financial year.

Keeping animals under control

Council continues to keep you and your whanau safe from dangerous dogs. No major injuries from dog attacks were reported this year thanks to 61 potentially dangerous dogs being impounded. Looking out for stock on major roads has kept our roads safe. No fatalities or major injuries occurred as a result of accidents involving stock.



Water Supply

Council is proud to supply residents with a world class water supply. Last year our water treatment staff won the "Top Team" award in New Zealand. The team is often "unsung". They ensure that the quality of the water reaching Gisborne households is always of the highest quality. They also make sure that even in drought conditions, when the demand for water is at its highest, that industry and household always have a reliable supply of water.

THE FUTURE OF OUR DISTRICT

Council was very future focussed over the last year. Our Ten Year Plan was finalised in June. This will provide a road map as to what projects Council will be focussing its resources on. The community outcomes project and finalising other strategies all contributed to the detail of the final plan. Formally known as the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) ours received an unqualified audit report and was praised by the Office of the Auditor General.

"So what did we do to secure our district's future?"

Community outcomes

Council facilitated a process last year where key community organisations got together to identify what we need as a community to make life better. These things were broken down into eight outcomes which looked to a vibrant, connected and environmentally sustainable place where people are prosperous, educated, safe, healthy and empowered. The process brought many agencies together including the Ministry for Social Development, Te Puni Kokiri, Department of Conservation, Tairāwhiti Polytechnic, New Zealand Police and Tairāwhiti District Health. It was a chance for Council and agencies to come up with a shared action plan to achieve these outcomes.

It highlighted where services are duplicated and where agencies can work together better. Long term this should lead to increases in the services that can be offered.

Urban Development Strategy

The Urban Development Strategy was adopted at the end of the financial year after a lot of input from Gisborne residents. This document will guide Council, developers and citizens on how the Gisborne urban area will be developed. In the future Gisborne city will make better use of our natural landscape features and reflect the cultural significance of this area. The strategy provides for improved access. Already Council is looking at a Regional Public Transport Plan and how to improve the Gisborne Bus Service.

Regional Economic Development Strategy

Funded by NZ Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) a Regional Economic Strategy was completed last year which highlights the strengths and weaknesses of doing business in the region and how we can capitalise on these. The aim is to ensure we all work together to increase the gross domestic product generated by this region and that there are enough jobs for all. Over the next two years \$514,000 is available for our region to implement the plan. An action plan which prioritises projects is now being put together. The strategy has already identified areas of undeveloped, unutilised land. This has been successfully addressed with a cropping programme up the Coast and a farm monitoring programme.

Wastewater treatment plant

Much progress was made on planning the district's long awaited wastewater treatment plant. This will be the biggest infrastructure development Council has ever built.



Consents have now been granted to build a reduced scope plant in Banks Street. Construction should commence in November 2009 with completion by 31 December 2010.

With the cooperation of Tangata Whenua and specific interest groups, Council was able to reduce the scope of the project and halve the cost from \$84M to \$45M. Council and these groups will work together to monitor the scheme and investigate ways to reduce contamination of our waterways and look for alternative uses and reduction of wastewater.

Stormwater

Council is progressively upgrading stormwater systems in the city and rural townships so that properties don't flood or "pond" in heavy rain events. Where possible the approach is to use "low impact designs" harnessing natural processes to reduce the effects of flooding and contamination of waterways.

YOUR COUNCIL YOUR PEOPLE

Council is committed to ensuring a positive and equitable working environment for its staff so they can concentrate on providing this district with the focussed services it deserves.

"So how are we doing this?"

Welcome Nedine Thatcher

Nedine Thatcher joined the Council as manager of the newly formed Community Planning and Development department. Originally from Kaiti with tribal affiliations to Ngati Porou, Nedine is the first woman to join Council's Corporate Management Team. Nedine has been busy coordinating Council's economic and community development activities with the strategies and policies Council produces. Nedine is passionate about initiatives that build strong resilient neighbourhoods. She is also keen to

get Council closer to our communities ensuring that we understand what is important to you.

Farewell Peter Fantham

Peter Fantham Senior Soil Conservator has moved to Australia after working at the Council for 31 years. He started out negotiating plans for erosion control with individual farmers before project managing a large afforestation scheme – 13,000ha of new plantings. Peter was appointed Senior Soil Conservator in 1996. Recently he has been involved in the overlay 3A mapping; filling in the gaps between farm and catchment mapping to ensure district wide coverage. Thanks for your service Peter and although your breadth of knowledge will be missed, landowners can be assured plenty of experience remains within Council. Kerry Hudson, who has been with Council for over 25 years, will replace Peter.

Specialist urban design planner

Urban design received a real boost this year. Not only was our Urban Design Strategy adopted but a specialist urban design planner was employed and an urban design champion appointed. Duncan Rothwell has considerable experience planning cities working in England. Councillor Pat Seymour has taken up the mantle of urban design champion; a role initiated by the Ministry for the Environment. Pat will act as a mentor to Duncan's position helping to provide for Gisborne into the future.

Pat has a real interest in urban design and the district's history. She is excited by the potential options for the War Memorial Theatre and the surrounding area.

Intercouncil sports day

Council welcomed 650 competitors to Gisborne from around the country at the annual intercouncil sports tournament.



According to regular attendees it was 'the best tournament ever'. The weather was perfect, the competition intense and the competitors fired up. The organising committee took the opportunity to showcase the best food, wine and culture that the district has to offer.

Pay and employment equity

Council was one of the first participant's in the Department of Labour Pay and Employment Equity (PaEE) Review to investigate whether there were gender biases in Council's employment conditions. The review was very successful in engaging staff, identifying issues and proposing practical solutions. A group has been formed to advocate for equity in training, promotion, a healthy work/life balance and conditions that enable staff members to meet family responsibilities.

Job evaluations

A review of remuneration and performance systems within the Council was undertaken to ensure consistent and equitable internal relativities between all staff. It showed that individual jobs may not have been correctly valued and this has now been rectified.

A LOOK AHEAD

While this report is about the past year it is worth taking a look ahead to see what opportunities and challenges may present themselves.

Council will be considering the effect of changes to the Resource Management Act and the Local Government Act which are both being reviewed. We are interested in ensuring that locally elected Councillors continue to be responsible for care of our natural resources and our communities' well being.

The Council's ability to be an effective partner and collaborator with Tangata Whenua post the Treaty settlement negotiations is likely to be important in achieving enduring settlements. Negotiations and consultation on possible land sales and the formation of a local leadership group will continue.

The relationship between Council and Eastland Community Trust especially on economic development and community facilities will also be critical to the future.

The past year has been a tough one for the people and businesses of our community. There are signs that the global economic crisis is abating. Gisborne was relatively slow into recession and may also be slow to come out. Regional economic growth has been slightly positive, bucking the national trend. We may experience a lag in growth in jobs in the district but remain positive that the summer peak of activity and the developments that are underway in the district will provide benefits for us all.

