

# town & country matters



December 2010 | Issue 60

## From the Mayor, Meng Foon



*Tena koutou e nga whanau o te Tairawhiti. Greetings to you all. You have spoken and elected our new positive Council for the next three years. Ying and I thank you for your support. We will continue to support you in all that you do.*

We have hit the road running. Committees have been restructured and new chairs appointed. We've been tested by the October flood, a timely reminder about our region's vulnerability with evacuations, road closures, slips, damming of rivers and loss of early season plantings.

The two major river projects, Waiapu and Waipaoa, will now get the attention they deserve. Our safety and economy relies on good infrastructure. We will present firmer proposals for our communities to consider. Personally, doing nothing is not an option.

Due to the economic downturn, Hikurangi Forest's new mill has been delayed until there is more certainty in the global economy. Council fully supports Hikurangi and more wood processing industries. It's a shame to see so many whole logs going off shore. Processing wood here in Tairawhiti and processing other primary produce is the future of more jobs and prosperity in our region.

As we start on our budgets, my vision is to have the rates increases as close to inflation as possible.

It is great to see burned-out and earthquake-shaken properties on Gladstone Road being refurbished and nearly opened again. We need to have our CBD retail stores open.

Congratulations to Ngati Porou for signing the deed of settlement. Council will support any initiatives that will prosper Ngati Porou as the prosperity will flow into our community.

Wastewater treatment plant is tracking well. From a feng shui perspective, our region will prosper more with a clean bay. The life force is back.

The Tairawhiti Navigational Project has more ups than downs and we will continue to progress this very important project for the pride of our communities. This project also has economic benefits for tourism operators as well.

Blessings for success have taken place for the Motu Trails project and the Wharekahika Bridge at Hicks Bay. But the state of our highways, SH2 and SH35, are a concern.

Our doors are always open. My Facebook is busy too. Our team is working well together for the prosperity of all. Thanks to all of you for making our place prosperous and safe.

Kia ora, Meng



New councillors (L-R) Manu Caddie, Pam Murphy and Rehette Stoltz – all community development committee members – find out about the library's summer reading programme (See story page 2). The Big Bush Read offers fun activities, entertainment and READING until school starts again. Join now.

## Nearly there with wastewater plant

It's just a year since the first sod was turned for the Banks Street wastewater treatment plant. Yet by 31 December, the first wastewater will be making its way through the new system before being discharged, at a vastly improved quality, 1.8km into the bay.

Until then, it's all hands to the deck as the three main structures – the biological trickling filter tank, control room and pre-treatment building – are completed and fitted out with their mechanical and electrical components.

The biological trickling filter tank is virtually complete, its geodesic roof having been lifted into place in late October to cover 11,000 haybale-like black plastic media blocks sitting on top of a grid floor.

The three below-ground pump stations are close to completion. Works of art in themselves, their internal concrete walls are now lined with heavy duty plastic to prevent corrosion from hydrogen sulphide gas generated by untreated wastewater.

Three large bark odour beds, fitted with air extractor pipes, have been built and these will receive odour from the bottom of the trickling filter tank. From early January, the city's wastewater will be screened through very fine stainless steel mesh before being pumped up 8m within the trickling filter tank from where it will be distributed via six rotating arms to trickle slowly through the plastic media. The fine solids remaining in the wastewater are then transformed into plant-like matter before being discharged. Currently, the city's domestic wastewater is only screened.

Treated wastewater will be collected at the bottom of the tank, combined with milliscreened industrial effluent in the new outfall pumping station, then pumped through to connect into the existing outfall. The Banks Street construction is just part of the wastewater upgrade that includes two industrial separation schemes which will see industrial effluent bypass the trickling filter tank. These schemes are also virtually complete. Industries will be connected to the new system once the treatment plant is commissioned.

The project has provided work for various city subcontractors. At times, more than 25 local people are working on site.



It's progress every day on the Banks Street site. The pipes coming out of the outfall pump station (centre) now go into a central manifold. Treated wastewater will soon be pumped 1.8km to sea. The pre-treatment building (centre back) now has its roof (inset) and the trickling filter tank (back left) is 99% complete.

# New team ready to lead community into next era

The public has decided and now Mayor Meng Foon and Deputy Mayor Nona Aston are leading the new Gisborne District Council through to 2013. Fifty five percent of eligible people voted, up from 52.1 percent in 2007, an increase of 1200 people. Deputy Mayor Nona Aston says it is exciting to have new councillors with fresh ideas. "Similar ideas may have been raised in the past, but they possibly didn't work because it wasn't their time. Maybe, now is their time." Four new councillors are now getting to grips with their role. Manu Caddie says that although his first Council meetings were a mix of fun and frustration, he feels honoured to be appointed deputy chair of

the community development committee. "I feel the weight of responsibility of being a councillor but am confident we have a team of people – councillors and staff – passionate about the wellbeing of our communities. We live in exciting times. While we face some huge challenges, there's a huge amount of goodwill in Te Tairāwhiti and I'm confident we can lead the country in many areas." Rehette Stoltz was also pleased to be on the community development committee. "I am passionate about our community and especially children. I am a big supporter of the library and I want my two boys to develop the same love for books and reading that my parents instilled in me."

Pam Murphy says her main interest lies in representing Waikohu and making Gisborne a better city. She is interested in tourism, recognises the need for economic development and, among other things, supports the library's service to rural communities through the Outreach programme. Matakaoa's Patrick Tangaere (right), in his election campaign, said he knew the problems facing farmers, young people, whanau and hapu and wanted to be part of the solutions. Roding and the environment were of particular interest.



## YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

are there to help you. Ring them on the numbers below. Go to [www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz) or call 867 2049 for more details.

<b>MAYOR</b>	
Meng Foon .....	867 1870
<b>DEPUTY MAYOR</b>	
Nona Aston.....	868 9842
<b>GISBORNE</b>	
Craig Bauld.....	862 9550
Manu Caddie .....	868 6889
Andy Cranston .....	868 1160
Alan Davidson.....	867 9474
Allan Hall.....	868 6269
Rehette Stoltz.....	868 5382
Brian Wilson .....	867 1600
<b>PATUTAHU/TARUHERU</b>	
Roger Haisman .....	867 0922
<b>COOK</b>	
Graeme Thomson.....	862 8737
<b>UAWA</b>	
Pat Seymour .....	862 2697
<b>WAIKOHU</b>	
Pam Murphy .....	863 5822
<b>WAIAPU</b>	
Bill Burdett.....	06 864 8966
<b>MATAKAOA</b>	
Patrick Tangaere .....	06 864 3900



Animal control officer Steve Greaves is enjoying the much-upgraded new facility for the district's wandering dogs.

## Pound dogs doing it in style

The district's wandering dogs don't know themselves. Having for years endured an outdated pound too cold in winter and too warm in summer, Gisborne's pooches are now stretching out in a purpose-built facility at the end of Dunstan Road.

The \$558,000 facility, which officially opened last month, provides indoor spacious kennel space for 27 dogs and outside space for six. The property also houses a dangerous goods store. Animal control officer Steve Greaves says the new facility is already a winner with staff, dogs and the SPCA.

"The facility will be heated in winter and well-ventilated in summer, and has a large paved and covered exercise area. There's even a public counter and office area."

Its size and construction features put it streaks ahead of its predecessor, a 16-pen pound in Carnarvon Street where dogs were often doubled up in pens, a practice that was neither desirable nor safe.

The pound is easy-clean, thanks to a painted, non-slip, totally washable floor and ... running hot water.

"Good ventilation means the kennels dry much faster than before and the whole clean-up takes less time. The cages are better designed too. Being above ground level makes it safer to handle dogs because you can stand firmly in front of them rather than having to bend down."

Although dog control staff hope not to fill all kennel space, it seems the city's dogs have heard about the new service and are keen to try it out, with only two indoor kennels free during the first week of November. About 60 dogs a month are impounded. While most dogs are claimed within hours or a couple of days, unclaimed dogs are held for seven days at a cost to their owners of \$190 (\$71 and a \$17 a day sustenance fee) before being released or re-homed.

"The number of dogs being microchipped is pleasing," he says, "and has made a big difference to reuniting dogs with their owners."

About a quarter of the district's 12,000 dogs are now microchipped. Animal control provides a 24-hour emergency callout service every day of the year.

## How's your septic system?

Rural township septic systems are in the spotlight in a bid to improve their operation and maintenance. While the city is busy cleaning up its wastewater act, with the new treatment plant soon operational, natural resources team leader Yvette Kinsella says the focus is now on septic system management.

"Our biggest concern is that some systems are not working as well as they need to. Collectively, this is resulting in faecal contamination of soil, ground water and rivers. We want to ensure septic systems are effective and designed correctly for their site to avoid effects on the local environment."

Staff have begun to identify people's septic system issues. Look out for a survey before Christmas.

"We also want to hear what solutions might work, such as a warrant of fitness check at the time a septic tank is cleaned or increased education on septic systems. A lot can be achieved by maintaining systems properly. We plan to have Around The Tank education sessions in some communities using someone's septic tank being cleaned to better explain how tanks work and how to maintain them."

Community meetings have started and will continue into 2011. Look out for one near you.

Contact Jo Callis 867 2049 for more information.

## Cycle trail may be catalyst for township growth

Motu and Matawai township are gearing up for what could be the best thing since their boom days of sawmilling. With the first sod turned last month for the \$1.74m Motu Trails cycleway project, Motu and Matawai people are looking at opportunities likely to arise and how best to plan for growth.

As with cycle trails in other areas, the Motu Trails cycleway is expected to foster economic development and entrepreneurship.

The communities are working collaboratively with Gisborne and Opotiki district councils, DoC and iwi. Natural resources policy team leader Yvette Kinsella says Council, as part of developing township plans, has been helping the communities set strategic goals and develop specific actions in tandem with the Motu Trails development.

"They are self-motivated and excited about the potential opportunities. They have developed

themes they want to explore such as sawmilling for Motu and back-to-nature hunting and fishing for Matawai. The principals and pupils from both schools are involved, creating design ideas for seating, planting, car-parking and building character.

"The Motu community has provided some creative designs for an area opposite their school. They want to make this a pleasant place for cyclists at the start of the Motu Trails and campervan sites are also a possibility in the village. Matawai people would like to develop the main street as a more encouraging place for families to stop, rest, eat and play before continuing their journey."

Transit has already agreed to safety upgrades on SH2 around the Matawai township which will more visibly encourage traffic to slow down and should provide safer turning for traffic into Motu Road.

# In short

## Council staff there to help all year

Whether it's Christmas Day or a normal working day, staff are available to deal with your emergency problems all day, all year. Phone 867 2049

## Time to check riverbank trees

Keep our rivers free from debris. It's time for landowners and managers to check their riverbanks, safely remove dead and fallen trees, and prune other vegetation and trees that could fall over and end up in waterways. Check Council's website for fire information.

## Flush water before drinking

Residents are reminded of the Ministry of Health recommendation to flush a mugful of water from drinking-water taps (including those with filters) each morning before use to remove any metals that may have dissolved from plumbing fittings. This is recommended for all households, including those on public and private water supplies.

## Another footbridge upgrade

Crossing the city's footbridges has become a whole lot more enjoyable thanks to Council upgrades in the past 18 months. Last year the Derby Street footbridge was upgraded, the Hall Street bridge followed in September this year and now it's Grundy Street's turn. The footbridge – which provides a popular accessway to intermediate and secondary schools – links Grundy with Oak Street and the footbridge across to Aberdeen Road. The decking was replaced and structure reinforced and cleaned.

## New Wharekahika Bridge opened

The Wharekahika Bridge at Hicks Bay was officially opened in late November. It is hoped that the road up and over the functional concrete-decked bridge will eventually be sealed. Council staff would like to set the record straight on the builder of the bridge's forerunner, believed to have been Charlie McCracken who was also responsible for the Hicks Bay and Tokomaru Bay wharfs, and the Peel Street bridge. If anyone knows otherwise, please ring Council.

## Manutuke township plan at draft stage

Water and Argentine ants are major elements of the Manutuke draft township plan, due to be considered by Council this month. The plan involves reducing drainage issues, improving access to water and improving the quality of the water in rivers. Argentine ants are also a concern. Council has set up a special project to help develop an awareness plan and coordinate control measures with landowners. The community meets monthly. Contact Angela Rean or Trindy Scragg for more details.

## Wide readership for *Town & Country Matters*

*Town & Country Matters* continues to rate well with the public, according to the annual independent Communitrak resident satisfaction survey. A whopping 92 percent of people who had seen, read or heard Council information published or broadcast in the past 12 months had seen or read *Town & Country Matters*. Seventy-two percent of residents rated the content of Council publications as excellent or good. While the daily *The Gisborne Herald* remained the main source of Council information for 58 percent of district households surveyed, *Town & Country Matters* – published just four times a year – was the main source for 12 percent of residents, up from 8 percent in 2008. The survey found more people were satisfied with most of Council's services and facilities, and residents are increasingly satisfied with staff performance.



HEB Construction Gisborne managers Norma and Ken Clews (left) and national road maintenance manager Chris Peters (back centre) with East Coast road workers (L-R) Shawn Haenga, Taki Rangī, Leon Higgins, Raymond Tarei, Stewart Puha and Tut Hailey.

## Coast roads in capable hands of HEB workers

HEB Construction is now responsible for maintaining Council's East Coast roads north of Pouawa. The national company was the successful tenderer for the three-year maintenance contract which, if both parties agree, can be renewed for another two years. The previous contractor was Fulton Hogan. Ken and Norma Clews, who are from the Gisborne area, manage HEB's Gisborne branch and oversee its Te Puia depot. HEB currently employs eight people to maintain the Coast roads and sees opportunities for further skilled people to join them.

The HEB team, selected on their skill and knowledge of the local area, has been going through induction and health and safety training to ensure community expectations are understood and delivered safely. Council roading engineer Dennis Malone says HEB Construction won the three-year maintenance contract in an open competitive tender process. The price is \$3m less than the 2007 contract price. "Council is obliged to take the lowest complying tender price, taking attributes into account, or it would lose the government subsidy for the work."

## Proud about excellent customer service

Waves feature high on retiring corporate services manager Douglas Birt's agenda. Having enjoyed the sound of waves breaking on the Okitu shore for the past 12 years, the telecommunications engineer hopes that from early next year he will find the time to sail in northern waters ... and dive into the fascinating world of radio waves. He may even use his engineering skills to make a few waves in Tanzania, where his wife Catherine spent a year teaching and to where they wish to work again.

Douglas found in his Council role the two things he says you need in life – a challenge and to be able to make a difference. He hit the ground running in 1998 to run the Y2K project, and coped with computer system havoc after 1 July 1999 – Council's first month of the year 2000. Part of his varied workload included introducing new phone and computer systems, a more equitable rating system, based mainly on capital value, together with some of the most advanced rates remission policies in New Zealand, and an information management department. Besides being a strong advocate for the library and rural broadband, he championed a massive improvement in Council's customer service, streamlining the public counter area into an efficient unit.

"I can't take all the credit but I have championed it



Retiring corporate services manager Douglas Birt (right) jokes with successor, Mike Drummond by handing him his trusty abacus.

and am pleased with the results. In a nation where the word excellent doesn't trip easily off the tongue, the number of people saying Council's customer service is excellent – 72 percent average – puts it in the top echelon of successful businesses."

Douglas was also the organiser of the Autumn Arts Festival until 2007, and has been active on the committees of the Patutahi Reserve Board, Rotary (Rotary director of the International Music Competition), Radio Club, and Computers in Homes. Douglas hands over to new manager, former chief financial officer Mike Drummond, in January.

## Please get permit, toilet before freedom camping

Freedom camping in Gisborne has to be THE cheapest accommodation around. Where else could six people stay next to one of the region's best beaches or river for a paltry \$10 for 2 nights, \$25 for 10 nights and \$60 for 28 nights?

If you are going camping, please:

- Get a chemical toilet.
- Get your permit before setting up camp. Phone Council, buy them online at [www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz) or through the post.
- Make your permit visible to inspectors – in a caravan window, in a plastic bag attached to a tent.
- Put only 5kg of rubbish in each blue bag and keep it beside your campsite for collection.

- Recycle as much as possible and take it home to put in your kerbside recycling bin or take to All Brites.
  - Pouawa's Porta Potti tanks will be located at the beginning, middle and northern end of the beach to make them more easily accessible for all campers. If the tank nearest your camp is full, please use another one along the beach.
  - Take care of yourself and each other
  - When the holiday is over, take away all rubbish from the site that can't go in bags such as broken chairs, barbecues, buckets and batteries.
  - Have a wonderful holiday.
- Pick up a freedom camping brochure from Council or go to [www.gdc.govt.nz/freedom-camping](http://www.gdc.govt.nz/freedom-camping)

## Keep safe this summer wherever you are

It's summertime. Time to take extra special care on the roads, when driving and cycling, by the water, around food, near fire and in the sun. Time to take extra special care of each other and the environment. Please show respect wherever you are, whatever you are doing.

### Be a good ambassador

Chief executive Lindsay McKenzie says summer is an opportunity for Gisborne to showcase itself and for its people to act as good ambassadors for the region.

"The weather, beaches and scenery speak for themselves but we need to match these natural attributes with the warmth of our welcome. Our current visitors are potentially some of our future residents."

A relative newcomer himself, he has since been hooked to the region. He recently attended the World Rowing Champs at Lake Karapiro where a tribe of volunteers welcomed and assisted visitors at the venue.

"They were so welcoming and well-informed about their district, it made a huge difference to our experience. I can see how something similar would be of great benefit here with our upcoming major events, such as Rhythm & Vines, Te Matatini and the Jose Manuel reunion."

### Prepare yourself for any event

Gisborne is well prepared for a tsunami, as shown by October's Exercise Tangaroa. But there is no time for complacency.

### What can you do?

Find out if your house or campsite is in an evacuation zone. Go to [www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz) or ring Council 867 2049.

Pre-plan your escape route and where you can stay for eight to 12 hours. Read the inside back page of the phone book.

Follow directions from Gisborne Civil Defence or Gisborne Police.

DO NOT go sightseeing after a significant event.

### Planning a fire?

**In rural areas** – Before you light a fire, ring Council to find out what fire season is in place and whether a permit is required.

**In the towns** – A restricted fire season is in place all year around. A permit is required for any fire lit in the open air. Permits are free but can take three days to process. If the season is upgraded to Prohibited, no fires are allowed to be lit in the open air. Gas cookers are allowed.

**On the beaches** – A total fire ban is in place all year on all beaches because of the risk of fire spreading and the cost of putting them out. Fire information is updated on Council's website [www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz)



### The bridge magnet

Yes, we know. Bridge jumping is irresistible for some. But the advice is clear, please don't jump. If the urge is uncontrollable, please be considerate of river users. Bridge jumpers are responsible for any damage caused.

# Turn over a new leaf .. and get composting

Eating vegetables and fruit that have fed on what were once kitchen scraps, lawn clippings and woody material does wonders for the soul.

What better new year's resolution could there be than to get composting. It's easy, helps the environment, and saves you money, because you can deal with your own green waste on your property and use the resulting compost to grow fruit and vegetables.

But how to make compost? To start with, you need a place to make it and some sort of system.

Mike Eriksen, one of Council's community master composters, advises people to work out their own system to suit their circumstances.

"This will depend on the space available and the material people have on hand. Good compost needs a mixture of green and brown material which can be layered."

Soft green materials are your grass clippings and kitchen vegetable scraps. Woody brown materials can be dried leaves, twigs and garden rakings.

"For a smaller section where you don't have much space, you need to break down your woody brown material as much as possible by using a heavy duty lawnmower."

If the only gardening you are doing at this time of the year is mowing the lawn you need to have woody brown material stored to use between your layers of grass clippings.

Autumn leaves or garden rakings can be put into a simple bin, wire mesh or rubbish bags with holes for aeration. Tip a bag of these between your catcher loads of grass clippings. Putting a thin layer of old compost into the bin provides a boost to the microbes needed for composting.



Environmental health educator Anne Lister (left) holds some brown woody material that master composter Mike Eriksen chopped up with his lawnmower. Mike mixes brown material with grass clippings and stores the mixture in bins behind him. This mix is left to decompose and is then used as a layer over each layer of kitchen scraps that go into the black plastic dalek-like compost bins at the left of him.

Keep your pile moist but not oozing when squeezed. It's best to keep your pile covered and water with a hose rather than relying on the rain to deliver the right moisture content.

With air and moisture, garden materials will start decomposing and turn to compost. It will turn to compost quicker if it heats up. For this to happen, you

need to make a sizeable pile, at least 1mx1mx1m. Build your compost bin to hold this amount. Turning makes it decompose faster. It's good having two or three bins so material can be forked from one to the next. The empty bin then becomes the one to which you add your new waste.

For further advice, call Council on 867 2049.

## Creative direction drives Navigational Traditions Project

An excited buzz is already developing around the Tairāwhiti Navigational Traditions Project.

Within a short time of \$200,000 in feasibility funding being available, APR Consultants Ltd and Te Puia New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts have completed an interpretation and sustainable business model, creative director Karl Johnstone has been appointed and CPG has been awarded the contract for the infrastructure's design and build.

Karl Johnstone, a former Gisborne man and Te Puia's acting chief executive, is responsible for overseeing the artistic and cultural input to the project, ensuring the consistency and continuity of themes and ensuring they link into Tairāwhiti Museum, the hub of the project.

Joint project manager Peter Higgs says creative

direction, rather than engineers, is driving the design.

"The engineers will then figure out how to build the different components.

"It's not about a specific brand as such but rather the themes we expect to come through such as our navigated past, contact, settlement and survival.

"CPG has put together a consortium of landscaper designers Soul Environments and Downer for the infrastructure design and build. They will develop a concept design of the physical infrastructure and the cultural and artistic components so they can cost it out. The aim is to have the feasibility and costings completed by May 2011 to enable applications to be made for funding."

If funding is achieved, the same people and entities

will continue bringing the project to fruition.

The project aims to deliver a quality visitor experience throughout Tairāwhiti by developing various sites – including Gisborne's inner harbour, Titirangi, and Wairoa's Rangihoua Pa and Pilot's Hill – where viewing facilities and information boards could successfully portray the region's navigational heritage.

The project supports economic development through connecting businesses, developing recreational facilities and interpretation of the district's rich history.

The bulk of the funding to date has come from NZ Trade & Enterprise, \$157,000, with \$25,000 from Eastland Community Trust and \$15,000 from Eastland Port. Council is managing the project and contributing in-kind staff time.