



Cycleway's bid to attract more Eastern Bay visitors moves up a gear

The recently established Motu Trails Charitable Trust is working to secure funding to actively promote and market the trail and its associated operators. The Motu Trails project is one of 18 "Great Rides" which secured funding from the Government's Nga Haerenga – National Cycle Trails initiative.

Trust chairman Adrian Gault said funding was currently being sought. There had been \$10,000 initial funding each from the Department of Conservation and the Ōpōtiki and Gisborne District Councils. However, ongoing marketing requirements meant the trust needed regular income from sponsorship, donations, commissions and other funding.

Once completed the cycle trail will extend from Motu Village, down either the old Motu Coach Road or the upgraded Pakihi Track, through pristine native bush, farmland and coastal environments to Ōpōtiki.

A funding plan was being developed, a name and brand, a job description for an executive officer and a business plan/marketing plan. Mr Gault said the trust intended to work closely with the local community in Ōpōtiki to provide opportunities for local businesses to benefit.

He said the increase in tourists would boost the local economy through the purchase of associated services, and the trust would provide support to ensure services were delivered to the highest standard.

Encompassing the region's core attractions - wilderness, indigenous culture, coastal vistas, heritage and history; the brand will focus on attracting domestic and international visitors seeking a cycling experience with a difference.

The nine-person Motu Trails Charitable Trust includes residents of the Ōpōtiki and Gisborne districts, with experience in business management, sports administration, recreational cycling, marketing and public relations, and financial management.

Ōpōtiki members of the trust include, Mr Gault – a former Ōpōtiki District Councillor and Tablelands farmer, sports administrator Carol Quirk, cyclist Dave Emslie, tourism operator and kiwifruit orchardist Robyn Woolsey, long-established retailer Brendan Hickey and Whakatohea representative Arihia Tuoro. Motu school principal Paul Cornwall represents the Motu area and accountant Richard Coates and Public Relations professional Dana Kirkpatrick represent the Gisborne interests. ☺

Draft Annual Plan



The council's draft Annual Plan 2011/12 has been released for consultation, outlining what we plan to do over the next year and how it will be paid for.

Council Chief Executive Aileen Lawrie said it was important for the community to understand what is in the plan and to have an opportunity to have their say on the proposals and decisions included in it.

"It is important that we achieve the right balance between providing services to our community and maintaining rates at an affordable level. Feedback on the draft Annual Plan helps us make the right decisions for our community."

Key capital projects included in this year's draft Annual Plan:

- The construction of a sports pavilion at Memorial Park.
- Council office upgrade for energy efficiency.
- Sealing the Department of Conservation/I-site yard.
- Te Kaha water treatment upgrade (subsidised).
- Sewage and stormwater upgrades (ongoing programme).
- Sealing Tablelands Road.
- Enhancement of the Tirohanga Stream cycleway proposal (in partnership with the Department of Conservation).
- Construction of the Motu Cycleway (externally funded).

Submission forms are available from the council website www.odc.govt.nz, at the council customer service centre or at the Ōpōtiki library.

Submissions are open until 19 May and the final Annual Plan will be adopted on June 21, 2011.

Historical journey along the Motu Trail

Local kaumatua shared the history and culture of the Motu on a trail Hikoī last month.

Te Riaki Amoamo, Matenga Biddle and Chippie Apanui from Whakatohea, and Bill Maxwell and Rangī Davies from Ngai Tai, were joined by over 40 people.

The Hikoī visited the Pakihi Valley, Hikuwai, Tirohanga, Toatoa and finished at Motu Village. Stories that were shared will feature on signs along the trail once it's completed.

A special thanks to Danny Paruru and Te Riaki Amoamo who organised the Hikoī.



New water supply in action

Ōpōtiki residents are enjoying cleaner water after two new bore supplies were put into action in February.

Until now four different sources supplied water to the town's water treatment plant – a tributary of the Otara River, two bores near Otara Road and a small bore located alongside the Waioeka River. The mix of waters caused iron and manganese deposits to build up inside the pipes and one water source had to be treated to remove soil and biological particles.

Ōpōtiki District Council Chief Executive Aileen Lawrie said it was wonderful to now have cleaner water for generations to come.

"The average water demand in town is currently 25 litres of water per second. The new bores are capable of supplying 100 litres per second, meaning we're well equipped for years to come."

The new bores meet Ministry of Health (MOH) requirements for a safe and secure water supply and tests have been carried out to confirm there are no contaminants present. Iron and manganese minerals are much lower than the previous supply and deposits can be removed with a simple treatment process.

MOH does recommend that all taps, regardless of the water supply, should be flushed to fill a cup full of water when turned on each morning before drinking. This recommendation is made across New Zealand as some plumbing fittings have the potential to build up minute traces of metals in the water that sits in taps.

Residents may experience some short-term water discolouration as the pipes clear over the coming months. If this does occur, residents should flush taps until the water is clear before it's consumed.

Water from hydrants should not be removed without council approval, as water flow disturbance could cause sediment problems in the water supply. If you see anyone removing water from hydrants, please contact the council on 07 315 3030.

New supermarket a step closer

A decision on the development of a new New World supermarket is expected in May this year.

The new supermarket is proposed for Bridge Street, next to the existing New World building. The current supermarket would operate until the new one is built. It would then be demolished and the area developed for customer parking.

Thirteen submissions were received on the supermarket proposal. Some of the key issues raised included concerns

about traffic safety, noise, flooding and security. In response, the supermarket consent applicant completed further consultation, assessments and engineering work to address the issues.

The consent applicant provided an updated report to the council and a meeting was held on March 10, where submitters had the opportunity to discuss their concerns.

A hearing will be held in April, before a final decision is made.

Timely review of earthquake policy

Christchurch's devastating earthquake has highlighted the importance of preparing the Ōpōtiki district for a potentially catastrophic event.

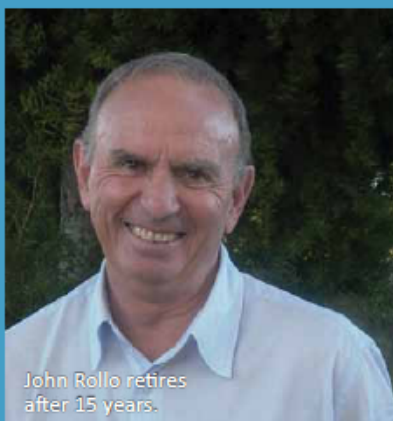
In 2006 the council adopted its first Earthquake Prone Buildings Policy under section 131 of the Building Act.

This policy review will set out an approach to identify at-risk buildings in Ōpōtiki and how the council should work with building

owners to proof buildings from earthquake damage. It will also identify requirements for heritage buildings.

The new policy will take into account lessons learnt from the two recent Christchurch earthquakes and the Gisborne quake in December 2007.

Building owners in the Ōpōtiki CBD will be consulted with during the review process.



John Rollo retires after 15 years.

Fond farewell to John Rollo

Having earned the greatest of respect during his time at the Ōpōtiki District Council and in all his working life, John Rollo will be leaving us this month.

John spent fifteen years with the council as Finance Manager and deputy CEO, after working at Inland Revenue, Audit New Zealand, Electric Power, hospital boards and other councils.

Ōpōtiki Mayor John Forbes said John provided a level of service that

gained full admiration from the many business contacts a finance manager has to deal with.

"Fellow staff, councillors and the community at large held him in extremely high regard."

During the 1990s council expenditure increased significantly, when sewer, water and street upgrades took place. Later that decade, and in more recent years, major storms put a strain on finances.



Humbling visit to quake stricken Christchurch

The enormity of the catastrophe in Christchurch hit home for two council employees sent to the city to provide Civil Defence support.

Dan Mitchell and Stu Chapman joined Operation Suburb to undertake residential welfare and building inspections. Dan said the impact on Christchurch suburbs was far greater than he imagined.

"The media mostly reported on the damage to the CBD, which was terrible as expected. However, we had no idea how big the problem was in the suburbs.

"We arrived nine days after the earthquake and we were the first to visit many households. Our role was to check the immediate welfare of people and the safety of their houses," said Dan.

"Giving the okay did not mean the houses were necessarily habitable in the long term. Whilst there we estimated 10,000 properties would need to be demolished in the suburbs I visited alone. Since then the number has risen, so across the city there are going to be tens of thousands of households homeless," he said.

At the height of Operation Suburb, 215 building control officers were involved from councils around the country. In total, approximately 65,000 inspections took place - 17,945 were undertaken on one particular day.

Dan said Christchurch residents were coping incredibly well under the circumstances and were extremely appreciative of the help they received, even after waiting for over a week.

While the high cost of these projects and events usually makes headline news, the prudent management of council accounts is often unreported. Compared to many other districts Ōpōtiki today has little external debt - a mark of John's guidance through these difficult times.

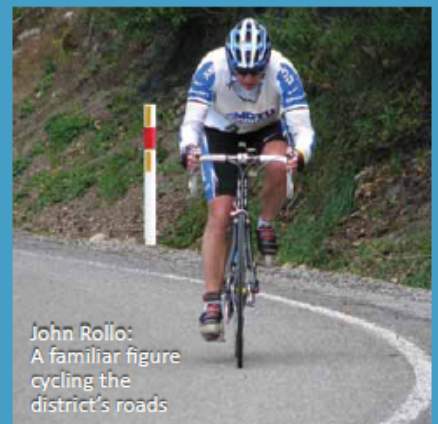
On a lighter note, staff liked to joke about the parts of John's fingers missing from his left hand - signs of his handyman experience. Things got more serious when discussions about cycling arose, as John's fitness and durability often showed up the younger ones.

John has always had a passion for sport.

In earlier years he played rugby, but with the arrival of his three children his interests shifted to rowing, soccer, cricket and surfing.

John and his wife Judy plan to spend more time at their Waihi Beach bach. However, we still hope to see John flying along on his bike or join him for a Guinness at the Masonic Hotel - where he's a member of the 100 pint club. John will be sadly missed. We wish him and his wife Judy a very happy retirement.

Go well John, and take care of your remaining fingers!



John Rollo:
A familiar figure
cycling the
district's roads

Task Force Green teams make progress

Task Force Green teams have been busy working on sections of the Motu Cycle Trail over the past few months.

Set up by the Ministry of Social Development, Task Force Green is an initiative which helps create jobs for unemployed people. Job Creation is a key objective of the Government funding.

Motu Trails Project Manager John Galbraith said he was pleased with the progress to date.

“In just five weeks a team of five have rebuilt and realigned fences along river stop banks and have completed most of the construction over a three kilometre section of the trail.”

A significant part of the project is the creation of a trail section along the Otara River stop banks. Beginning at Te Rere Road, the trail will link to Te Ngaio beach via a new bridge located at Memorial Park, creating a pedestrian and cycle path from the town to the sea.

Another Task Force Green team has been working for the Department of Conservation since November on the Pakihi Valley track section of the cycleway. The section is proving more of a challenge, with the team camping five nights per week in the valley.



The Task Force Green team take a hard earned break

Torere tennis programme packs courts this summer

A tennis programme launched for the Torere community has proved highly successful, with courts overflowing with players every week.

The Let’s Go Whanau programme started in October 2010. It aims to bring people from isolated communities together through sport and helps identify and address barriers to participation in sport, helping clubs attract more members.

Tennis is one of four sports included in the programme and Sports Coordinator Jacqueline Hayes-Kingi said participation had far exceeded initial expectations.

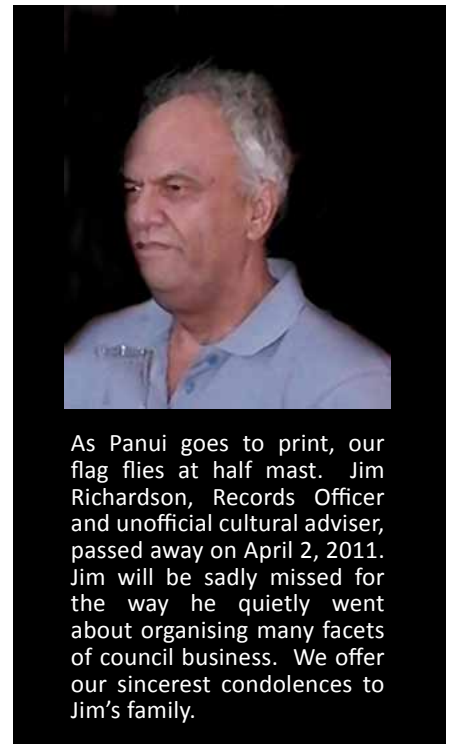
“For the first few weeks we taught adults basic tennis techniques. In the end extra training nights were added, a

tennis ladder challenge was set up and two teams travelled to Ōpōtiki to play in the business house competition.

“Parents and other volunteers helped coordinate tennis lessons for 20-30 children. The skill level increased immensely and they now all have the fundamentals needed to play a game of tennis - a sport they can play for life,” she said.

The three year Let’s Go Whanau project is funded by SPARC, the Whakatane, Ōpōtiki and Kawerau District Councils and the Bay of Plenty District Health Board. Other partners include Sport Bay of Plenty, Toi Te Ora Public Health and Mataatua Sports Trust.

This summer’s tennis programme finished on March 29, with the end of daylight savings.



As Panui goes to print, our flag flies at half mast. Jim Richardson, Records Officer and unofficial cultural adviser, passed away on April 2, 2011. Jim will be sadly missed for the way he quietly went about organising many facets of council business. We offer our sincerest condolences to Jim’s family.



Jayden Katene and Rangimaria White shake hands after their match against Paora Flowers.

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