Thursday 16 April 2020

A letter to the community from Mayor Alex Walker:

Thinking Forward

It’s fair to say that for the vast majority of us, these past few weeks have been spent navigating our new normal that is the Alert Level 4 lockdown and I thought we were starting to make some sense of it. But with the beginning of the new school term this week, the realities of being a working mother with three children at “home school” is very real to me, as it is to many others! Remote learning is exciting and innovative but it certainly has its challenges! On the other hand, some in our community have found themselves under an immense amount of financial stress resulting from job loss or loss of business revenue – through no fault of their own. While this might seem unfair while we are still in the intense realities of Level 4, it is time for us to lift our eyes and start thinking forward to the post-Covid future. Having a plan gives us some security and is something we can all do.

In particular I want to speak to our business community. Whether you are an essential business, a non-essential business that has been closed, or one in which you have been able to work from home, it is crucial that you start to do some homework about what operating in a Level 3 environment might look like. Your customers, your systems, your finances, your staff – all require some thought and planning. This isn’t easy – particularly when things still feel so uncertain and change so quickly – but taking the time to do this now will definitely help. Stay up-to-date with developments on both the covid19.govt.nz and business.govt.nz websites.

As a Council, we are preparing for what Central Hawke’s Bay will look like in the months following lockdown, ensuring that the community emerges strong, and united. Last week at our Meeting of Council two major topics in the agenda focused strongly, and united. Last week at our Meeting of Council two major topics in the agenda focused on what Council will do to minimise the economic impact to the current emergency situations of COVID-19 and the Drought on you and our local community. Whether you are a farmer enduring the drought, or a business owner/employee unable to work due to the current shut down, we understand the losses in income are causing you significant financial hardship and we are here to help in many different ways.

Many of you will now have received this quarter’s rates invoice in the post. I want to reiterate my previous message and acknowledge that for most this is extremely unwelcome. Unfortunately, the collection of rates is a necessity – they are required to provide lifeline services including water and waste. However, my commitment to you is that everyone who needs financial help will have access to it. Work and Income NZ, Accommodation Supplements and Wage Subsidies are available, but Council will also work with anyone on a one-to-one basis to minimise the stress and the financial burden. Our staff will not be charging rates penalties, and have access to things like payment plans and postponement policies that may help individuals in the short-term. Please make contact with the Rates Department to discuss your personal situation.

Together we thrive. E ora ngātahi ana.

Mayor Alex Walker.

Financial Support

We understand that COVID-19 will be causing financial strain for many in our community. The Government has announced a COVID-19 recovery package to support New Zealand business, boost incomes, and support households. For more information about financial support go to workandincomenz.govt.nz or phone 0800 559 009.

Over the next few weeks, many of you will receive your rates invoice in the post. We acknowledge that this is a difficult time to receive a rates notice and want you to know that your rates are critical to the delivery of essential services like roading, stormwater and wastewater systems, drinking water and rubbish collection, and in helping to manage the civil defence emergency response to COVID-19 and the drought. However, if individual ratepayers are experiencing genuine hardship we are committed to working with you to find a solution. Please contact our Rates team on rates@chbdc.govt.nz or phone 06 857 8060 to discuss putting a payment plan in place, to ensure we can waive any penalties and extend the payment deadline if needed.

Together we thrive! E ora ngātahi ana! For more information visit: www.chbdc.govt.nz
Central Hawke's Bay District Council’s response to COVID-19

16 April 2020

KIA HAUMARU TONU TE NOHO – STAY SAFE CENTRAL HAWKE’S BAY!

Covid-19 is a continuously evolving situation, requiring our whole community to stay focussed on following the advice from Government Agencies including the Ministry of Health and District Health Board. Central Hawke’s Bay District Council’s focus is on supporting response efforts, as we do everything we can to slow down the virus.

Now more than ever, our community needs to come together and treat COVID-19 with the seriousness it deserves, so we as a Council can put energy into what’s most important – the security of our services, and the protection of our most vulnerable people.

Together we thrive. E ora ngātahi ana.

WHAT WE KNOW:

• We’re at level four of the government’s four-level COVID-19 alert system: Eliminate. This means people are instructed to stay at home, educational facilities and businesses are closed except for essential services and lifeline utilities.

• Supermarkets and essential services remain open. You can find a list of essential businesses which are open in Central Hawke’s Bay by heading to our website and searching #covid19.

WHAT WE NEED YOU TO KNOW:

• We’re closely following the guidance of the New Zealand Government Ministry of Health, Hawke’s Bay District Health Board and Hawke’s Bay Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and have built a local plan in support of the national and regional response.

• Please be assured that our business continuity plan is robust, agile, and committed to ensuring your access to essential services.

• We’re taking steps to protect our staff and your services. The government has instructed people to stay at home and this means our office staff are home too. Until we are advised otherwise, you won’t be able to visit our office in person, however you can phone us on 06 857 8060 to speak to our customer service team who will advise you on what facilities are available to you over the course of the shut-down.

• Although some of our facilities and services have been suspended, core services like water and kerbside rubbish and recycling collection will continue as normal. Please head to our website or call our customer service team for advice on rural waste disposal.

• Council are working in partnership with Te Taikihenua o Tamatea.

• If you have internet access, the best website to head to for accurate and timely information relating to COVID-19 is www.covid19.govt.nz

For updates visit www.chbdc.govt.nz and search #covid19

Rural Recycling and Refuse Disposal

For those rural residents who live outside of the kerbside collection catchment, the Waipawa and Porangahau Transfer Stations are open to you at limited times for the disposal of refuse and recycling.

Waipawa Transfer Station:
When: Thursdays from 9.00am to 5.00pm
Where: Waipawa Transfer Station, Tikokino Rd

Porangahau Transfer Station
When: Wednesdays from 10.00am to 4.00pm
Where: Porangahau Transfer Station, Porangahau Road

Refuse must be disposed of in green or yellow prepaid Council rubbish bags only. Recycling must be brought to the Transfer Station in an open container for inspection before dumping. Please note that although you are able to dispose of your recycling we’ve received national direction that it is unable to be processed for recycling and therefore these items will be sent to landfill. The reason for this is that recycling items have to be sorted manually, meaning people need to physically touch each item, which raises the risk factor of exposure to COVID-19.

We don’t recommend stockpiling your recycling, as it adds pressure to sorting facilities later down the track and there are many uncertainties with the international market at the moment. If however you do wish to stockpile recycling at home - please ensure your recycling is thoroughly washed, dried and placed in a clean dry area. This is to mitigate fire risk and risk of transmitting COVID-19.

COMPETITION TIME

Trash to Fashion

Interested in getting creative while reducing your rubbish and recycling?

Let your imagination run wild and get your creative juices flowing with Central Hawke’s Bay District Council’s ‘Trash to Fashion’ Awards!

We’re looking to inspire your household ‘bubble’ to embrace their creativity and create a fashion garment out of everyday recycling and rubbish items.

To find out more and to submit an entry, head to www.chbdc.govt.nz and search #trashtofashion.
Drought and COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan on a page

NOW – Our Immediate Response

1. Leading Civil Defence in Central Hawke’s Bay to ensure comprehensive local welfare support
   Council is leading a local Civil Defence response and is coordinating with Hawke’s Bay Civil Defence and Emergency Management (HBCDEM), Ministry of Health, Police, Red Cross, Fire and Emergency (FENZ), Safer CHB and other agencies to ensure our community get the best welfare support possible.

2. Partnering with the establishment of Tihei Mauri Ora with Te Taiwhenua o Tamatea
   Council has worked with the Taiwhenua to establish a structure to enable direct engagement and support for our tangata whenua through marae and hapu networks within the District Health Board and Civil Defence structure called Tihei Tama Teata!

3. Refund consent fees affected by Lockdown
   Full refunds will be offered to anyone who wants to cancel a building consent or resource consent application that was lodged prior to 24 March 2020.

4. Early payments to suppliers
   The Council is moving from a monthly cycle of payment of supplier invoices to a weekly cycle to assist cashflow of local businesses and contractors in particular.

5. Create local jobs with local projects
   Council are investigating bringing forward or increasing parts of the District’s capital investment programme to stimulate local business and create jobs. This includes applying for additional funding through government economic stimulus packages.

6. Advocate to Central Government on behalf of our most vulnerable citizens
   Council will advocate to Central Government to increase the current rates rebate scheme for those in financial hardship.

7. Certainty for farmers in the Tukituki Catchment
   Council will continue to advocate on behalf of our community to Hawke’s Bay Regional Council on their regulatory approach towards implementation of the Tukituki Catchment Plan and associated consenting deadlines.

8. Rates Postponement Policy
   Council will implement its newly adopted Rates Postponement Policy which allows those in our community experiencing financial hardship due to Drought and effects of COVID-19, have their rates payment postponed.

9. Accelerate our regional, digital Business Hub project
   Council will accelerate our proposed regional digital business hub project through the Provincial Growth Fund to create a space for businesses to connect and evolve quickly in a post-COVID world.

NEXT THREE MONTHS – Short/Medium-term Recovery

10. Re-frame existing economic assessment work to identify ‘quick wins’
    Council staff will re-frame existing assessment work to include strategic analysis and potential direction for economic recovery.

11. Establish a Central Hawke’s Bay Recovery Task Force
    Council, in partnership with Centralines, will establish a CHB Economic Recovery task force which looks at developing and supporting community/industry led economic recovery projects.

12. Incorporate a community recovery lens in our grant funding policy
    Council will look to prioritise applications which contribute to community recovery from the effects of COVID-19 and drought.

13. Examine policies and processes to ensure Council can assist ratepayers who are experiencing financial hardship
    Council will examine ways in which it can soften the financial impact felt by our community through a proactive and more lenient approach in the application of our existing rates payment policies and development of new policies identified.

14. Rates Rebate for 1,000 most impacted ratepayers
    Council will look to utilise $200k from our ‘Catastrophic Events Fund’ to fund the creation of a new Rates Rebate Fund.

15. More financial relief options
    Council will proactively seek to soften the financial blow through revising the draft annual plan and consideration of the upcoming Long Term Plan in 2021.

16. Incorporating Social Procurement into Council’s capital works programme
    Additional emphasis will be given to the full range of social procurement, including local and iwi employment, contracting and business opportunities in our current and future capital works programme.

17. Continued prioritisation of Ngā Ara Tipuna and investigate feasibility of phase three opportunities
    Ngā Ara Tipuna will remain a transformational and aspirational project for tangata whenua, with renewed emphasis on the economic and business development work streams within that project.

Six Months Plus – Long Term Recovery

Ongoing development of Council Long Term Plan informed by new economic and social assumptions as council and community evolve in the post-COVID world.

For the full economic recovery action plan go to: www.chbdc.govt.nz/our-district/economic-development
**Farming through the Central Hawke’s Bay District Council Drought 2020**

Where to go for help and information for farmers, growers, workers and families.

The 2020 drought has hit our region hard and we are preparing for the dry spell to continue throughout Autumn.

Central Hawke’s Bay District Council is working closely with Hawke’s Bay Regional Council, Central Government Agencies and Emergency Management Agencies proactively to respond to the consequence of ongoing dry weather. We know that many of our local farmers and growers are struggling and ask you to look out for each other in what is a very tough time.

If you are struggling to deal with water restrictions, lack of stock water, lack of stock feed or other associated pressures from the dry please reach out to your neighbours, a friend, a farm professional such as your vet, or call the Rural Support Trust.

The Ministry of Primary Industries co-ordinates Government recovery assistance measures for farming families. There is help available, to find out contact the Rural Support Trust on 0800 RURAL HELP or visit the Central Hawke’s Bay District Council website and search #drought to be directed to the right place.

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**TukiTuki Catchment Plan Change 6 Update**

The 31st May 2020 deadline for consents still stands.

The Hawke’s Bay Regional Council encourages farmers to send in any completed applications for consent by mail or email. If you do not have an application prepared already, you can submit a ‘pre-application’.

For more details, or general help and advice about what to do in the current drought, please head to www.hbrc.govt.nz and search ‘Farmers Hub’.

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**Do you rely on tank water?**

Now is a great time to check and ensure you have enough in the tank to meet your needs. If your tank levels are low make sure you book in with the Otane District Water tanker. They are currently busier than usual and may take up to 7 days to reach you.

Phone 06 856 8090 or 027 WATER 4U to book in a tanker refill.

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**COVID-19: Primary Industries**

The primary industries have been included on the list of essential services in the COVID-19 response. You must register as an essential service in order to continue operating during the lock down period.

For more information and to register as a safe practice online, head to www.MPI.govt.nz and search COVID-19.

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**Feed Assistance**

Feed availability is currently a key concern for many farmers. Drought is having a significant impact on the amount of feed being grown across the country. Covid-19 and related measures are also having an impact.

MPI and partner agencies DairyNZ, Beef + Lamb NZ, AgFirst and Federated Farmers are providing remote feed planning support to farmers.