

# Community Connection



## Message from the Chief Executive

David Clapperton

It is exciting to see some significant projects underway to

improve Foxton. However, it was particularly sad to see the old Foxton Municipal Chambers building go last week.

Council and the Foxton Community Board approved the decision to demolish the 93-year-old building after a seismic review showed it had the potential for collapse during a moderate earthquake. Unsafe and unsalvageable, the building had been closed to the public for the past three years.

Its significant safety risk was proved during demolition when it became obvious that there was absolutely no reinforcing and the masonry just crumbled. The timber inside the building and the plywood front doors were borer-infested and disintegrated. Also, the concrete foundations were so thin in places that the digger broke through the foundations.

Looking positively, the removal of the Municipal Chambers has really opened up the view towards deMolen windmill and showcases what an asset this iconic building is to Horowhenua.



*DM Clapperton*

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## Three decades of local government service celebrated

The "Godfather of Foxton" Basil Vertongen received a recognition of service and fond farewell from the Foxton Community Board on Monday night.

About 25 people, including past and present board members and other community leaders, turned out to acknowledge Mr Vertongen's longtime contribution to the community. This includes nearly 30 years service in local government.

Mr Vertongen started with the Foxton Borough Council in 1987 and continued through and after amalgamation in 1989 when the Foxton Community Board was established. Throughout the term from 1989 to 2012 he had only one apology for nonattendance.

He also served as board chairperson for five consecutive terms from 1995 until 2010

In 1988 Mr Vertongen received a Queen's Service Medal for public services. Fellow board member and close friend David Roache said that is when he started calling him 'Sir Basil'.

He said that Mr Vertongen has been a catalyst behind many great projects, events and activities; going above-and-beyond to achieve benefits for the community.

Some key projects include the Foxton Memorial Hall redevelopment, Foxton Sea Wall, Foxton Beach Freeholding Account, Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom, MavTech Museum, Save Our River Trust, Hartley Street, the Foxton to Foxton Beach cycleway/walkway, Foxton Pools, the Main Street Christmas Tree and the Foxton Water Tower lighting.

LGNZ Community Board Executive chair Mick Lester said that Mr Vertongen has demonstrated great loyalty to his community and has selflessly devoted his time to make the community a better place.

District Mayor Brendan Duffy described Mr Vertongen as hardworking and honourable, and who has made an extraordinary contribution to Foxton and Foxton Beach.

"Basil, you're to be saluted for what you've achieved and you can stand proud that you have made a real, positive difference in this community," Mayor Duffy said.

Mr Vertongen was born and bred in Foxton, educated at St. Mary's Convent School and Foxton District High School, and has run a successful local business for 41 years.

He has also been involved in surf life saving at Foxton Beach for over 50 years and is a Life Member of Surf Life Saving New Zealand.



Retiring Foxton Community Board member Basil Vertongen, right, with board member David Roache and District Mayor Brendan Duffy.

# Water tower now a beacon of light

Foxton's landmark water tower is now lit-up after dark with local effect to rival that of Auckland's Sky Tower.

The Rotary Club of Foxton took on the community project, supported by the Foxton Community Board, Horowhenua District Council, and Rotary Club of Awapuni, to colourfully light-up the tower at the top of Seaview Gardens.

The industrial-looking concrete water tower transforms into a multi-coloured glowing beacon after dark, much more fitting for a town landmark.

The vision of Foxton Community Board members Basil Vertongen and David Roache, who first raised the idea 12 years ago, the lights were switched on for the first time on August 31 at a ceremony for Rotary club members and others involved

in the project.

Club president Chrissy Pedersen says the colour LED bulbs are low-maintenance, inexpensive to run, and versatile. With 18 programmes available, the colours are on a one-hour cycle.

"We have the ability to light the tower in certain colours for various events, such as green for St Patrick's Day, red for Red Nose Day, pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Week, or orange to mark the Dutch Day Out in Foxton. At the moment it's all blue for Blue September prostate cancer awareness month."

Chrissy says they drew on the expertise of lighting design curator Venky Kannan, a member of the Rotary Club of Awapuni, in Palmerston North, and are delighted with the results.



"The water tower lighting is just one project contributing to real momentum building in Foxton, along with Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom construction underway and the upcoming Main Street upgrade. For people who are passionate about helping create a positive future for Foxton, this is all really exciting."

Funding for the first stage included a \$25,000 grant from Horowhenua District Council, secured by an application from the Foxton Community Board, before the project was taken over by the Rotary Club.

Fundraising will continue for the next stages of the project, to light up the pathways and plantings at Seaview Gardens.

## More work underway to see if Foxton Pools can open all-year-round

The Foxton Pools facility is to close after tomorrow to allow remedial works to take place, ready for the summer season opening on 1 December. The work will include additional ventilation to allow the interior air temperature to be more consistent and comfortable.

The facility remained open over winter while the Levin Aquatic Centre was redeveloped, with the trial allowing Council staff to identify usage patterns

and identify further enhancements necessary to operate it all-year-round.

In addition, Council has engaged an engineer to report on the structural and mechanical works required to the building to run a successful year-round operation. Results will be presented to the Foxton Community Board and Council early next year before a decision can be made, based on the potential costs and work required.



## On the spot with one of the staff: Sue Madsen, Customer Services Officer



Sue Madsen

Sue single-handedly runs Council's customer service centre in Foxton. While she may not sit alongside her colleagues in Levin and Shannon, Sue is an extremely valuable and well-regarded member of the team.

Based at the Foxton Library, the customer service centre replicates the full-range of services available at Council's main office in

Levin. There is also not much that Sue does not know about Foxton and Foxton Beach and residents and visitors often benefit from her local knowledge and advice.

After moving to Foxton with her two children in 1990, Sue worked as a Retail Assistant at Homecraft Foxton and also as a Relief Teller at Postbank Foxton. She joined Council as a part-time Customer Services Officer at the Foxton office in 1995, also later working as a Relief Postie for the Foxton Delivery Branch, until 2010 when she became full-time for Council.

Among other tasks, Sue processes the majority of rates payments for Foxton

and Foxton Beach, approximately 1000 dog registration payments and 400 Rates Rebate applications each year. Each week she also deals with on-average 250 email requests for information from the public.

Sue says working in a small town allows her to build up a good rapport with customers.

"I find my job very rewarding, especially if I have managed to obtain a great outcome for the customer. Keeping up with new information, guidelines and procedures is certainly a challenge, but keeps the job interesting," she said.

"I enjoy living and working in Foxton and see great things happening in this town."

# Flagship facility like nothing else in New Zealand

Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom will be a highly-innovative combination of recreational, cultural, heritage, nature-based and community activities; and a place for people from different cultures to come together in a shared space.

The multi-purpose community hub will be home to:

- Piriharakeke Generation Inspiration Centre; celebrating local stories and aspirations, with a focus on Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga and its hapū who have links to Te Awahou (Foxton).
- New Zealand's National Dutch Connection Museum; to inform, educate and inspire visitors about New Zealand's Dutch connections.
- Horowhenua District Council's Foxton community library, customer service and visitor information centre.

It will also include world-class galleries for local, national and international exhibitions; meeting rooms, lounge spaces, demonstration and performance spaces; workshop and learning spaces; and a cafe.



## Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom construction off to a great start

Construction of Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom is progressing well, three months in.

The main contractor is Foxton-based company Caldwell Builders and involves approximately 35 sub-contractors, most from Horowhenua.

One of the first on site was Levin-based company Smiths Steel, which designs, fabricates and erects structural steel for projects between Wellington and Palmerston North.

General Manager Doug Mitchell, who lives at Foxton Beach, says it is great to work on such a significant job so close to home.

"It's excellent to see so many other local businesses involved, and we're certainly excited to be part of what is a very impressive project," he said.

"Our contribution is nearly 60 tonne of structural steel, including the 78 metre-long mezzanine

floor and a 13 metre bridge from the mezzanine to the upstairs meeting room. It's designed as a kitset, so we produce it at our factory, transport it to the site and assemble it, like a very large and heavy Meccano set."

"It's a nice project for us and we're looking forward to seeing the finished product, once all the steel is covered up."

Horowhenua District Council's Strategic Projects Coordinator Cathy McCartney says the progress is pleasing and that the construction team are doing a superb job.

This project is all about collaboration and with construction underway it highlights the industry skills and products we have in our own community."

Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom is expected to open to the public in June 2017.

# Foxton Main Street upgrade

Construction is about to begin in efforts to improve the safety, quality and ambience of Foxton Main Street and make it an area where people choose to visit, spend time and money.

Occurring between September and November, phase one of the construction will see Ravensworth Street converted to one-way north-east to allow more public space for the Memorial Plaza, more car-parking at the north-end of Main Street, and to enable a new roundabout to be built at the intersection with Park Street and Avenue Road. The new roundabout will improve pedestrian and traffic safety, as well as improve traffic capacity to future-proof it for growth in the town.

Phase two of the construction, between

November and January, will be to create a Memorial Plaza including the relocated Cenotaph.

Currently the Cenotaph is on a traffic-island in the middle of an intersection, which does not easily nor safely allow people to stop at it, contemplate and the honour the sacrifice that World War soldiers made for our community.

The plan is to have the Cenotaph in a Memorial Plaza in the area where it was first established in 1920. This will allow the current northern-end of Main Street to be closed off and ensure that vehicles do not travel through this significant cultural and

historical site. It will also enable a direct connection between the Cenotaph and the Ihakara Gardens and urupa.

Once the first two phases are complete, works will move to the south-end of Main Street to minimise disruption to businesses during the Christmas shopping season.

Work will then continue north as each section is completed, with the project completion scheduled for July 2017.

*Further info about the upgrade and construction programme can be found on Council's website [www.horowhenua.govt.nz](http://www.horowhenua.govt.nz)*



# Community Fun Day

*Come and celebrate the opening of Levin Aquatic Centre*

Lots of fun activities for the kids including bouncy castles, face painting, and dancing.



## What's happening

For further details and events visit [www.horowhenua.govt.nz/events](http://www.horowhenua.govt.nz/events)

**24 Saturday 24 September**  
**Levin Aquatic Centre community fun day**

11:00am - 4:00pm at the Levin Aquatic Centre, cnr Queen Street and Salisbury Street, Levin. Celebrate the re-opening of following the Centre's redevelopment over winter. On offer will be plenty of fun family-friendly activities including pool inflatables, bouncy castle, face painting, dancing, sausage sizzle and giveaways. Entry cost is the general admission fee. For info, visit [www.horowhenua.govt.nz](http://www.horowhenua.govt.nz)

**27 Tuesday 27 September**  
**Cloudy Bay Clams public meeting**

6:00pm - 8:00pm at the Manawatu Marine Boating Club, 50 Hartley Street, Foxton Beach. Cloudy Bay Clams invites all interested parties to a public meeting to discuss the harvesting of NZ Surf Clams in the Foxton area. Topics will include an introduction to Cloudy Bay Clams, an overview of the NZ Surf Clam fishery, harvesting methods, environmental impact, and community benefits. Light refreshments will be provided at the meeting. To attend please register by emailing [dion@cloudybayclams.com](mailto:dion@cloudybayclams.com) or [hadleigh@cloudybayclams.com](mailto:hadleigh@cloudybayclams.com)

**30 Friday 30 September**  
**Age on the Go Expo**

10:00am - 3.00pm at the Horowhenua Events Centre, Victoria Street, Levin. An expo to provide information, education and entertainment, promoting positive ageing by showcasing activities and services that focus on good health,

fun and support for older people in Horowhenua. Free entry. Community Health Shuttle transport available, leaving Te Takere at approximately 10am, 11am, 12noon, 1pm and 2pm. The expo, organised by Horowhenua District Council and with funding support from MidCentral District Health Board, is also held to mark International Day of Older Persons on Saturday 1 October.

**23 Sunday 23 October**  
**Foxton Spring Fling**

9:00am - 3:00m at Main Street, Foxton. Enjoy the wonderful stalls, sights, tastes and sounds along Foxton's Main Street. Take the kids for a horse-drawn tram ride, plenty of entertainment right throughout the day. Huge range of food stalls, crafts and rides. Don't miss the biggest event in town. Entry \$2 per person. Children under five free. For more info, contact organiser Debbie on 0204 006 4314 or [debbie@strictlymedia.co.nz](mailto:debbie@strictlymedia.co.nz)

**30 Sunday 30 November**  
**Foxton Beach Fun Run and Walk**

From 8:30am at Foxton Beach in front of Surf Life Saving Club. Choose between a 20km run, a 10km run/walk, or a 5km run/walk. Organised by the Foxton Lions Club, with proceeds to the Foxton Surf Life Saving Club, Coastguard Manawatu, and the Palmerston North Rescue Helicopter. Enter online at [www.foxtonlions.co.nz](http://www.foxtonlions.co.nz) or collect an entry form from Hammer Hardware Foxton or Mitre 10 Levin. Fore more info, phone 06 363 5368 or email [funrun@foxtonlions.co.nz](mailto:funrun@foxtonlions.co.nz)

## Council Meetings

### Horowhenua District Council

**5** The next meeting is on Wednesday 5 October at 4:00pm in Council Chambers, 126 Oxford Street, Levin. All welcome.

### Foxton Community Board

**21** The next meeting is on Monday 21 November at 6:30pm in the library at Manawatu College, 18 Ladys Mile, Foxton. All welcome.

### Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee

**30** Wednesday 30 November at 4:00pm in Council Chambers, 126 Oxford Street, Levin. All welcome.

## Horowhenua District Councillors



**Brendan Duffy** (Mayor)   **Garry Good** (Deputy Mayor)   **Wayne Bishop**



**Ross Brannigan**   **Ross Campbell**   **Michael Feyen**



**Victoria Kaye-Simmons**   **Jo Mason**   **Christine Mitchell**



**Tony Rush**   **Piri-Hira Tukapua**

## Foxton Community Board



**Janine Smart** (Chair)   **David Roache** (Deputy Chair)   **Tricia Metcalf**



**Amanda Street**   **Basil Vertongen**