

Community Connection

Issue 232 FEBRUARY 2026



Bernie Wanden

Message from the Mayor

Kia ora Horowhenua,

Welcome to the first Community Connection for 2026. I hope you were able to take a bit of time over the summer break to rest and recharge. As we head into the year ahead, there is a lot happening locally and nationally, and our focus remains on supporting our community, delivering core services, and making thoughtful decisions about what comes next for Horowhenua.

The year also began with some challenges across our district. Recent severe winds caused power outages and damage in a number of areas, and for many people that is a difficult way to start a new year. In response, the Mayoral Relief Fund was activated to help support residents and whānau who were financially impacted. Thank you also to everyone who checked on neighbours, offered help, or lent a hand where it was needed. Those acts of care reflect the strength of our community.

Our thoughts are also with people in other parts of the country, particularly Mount Maunganui, where families and communities are facing a deeply distressing and uncertain time. We're thinking of everyone affected as events continue to unfold.

As we look to the year ahead, there is a lot happening in the local government space. The Government is consulting on a range of reforms that could change how councils operate, including proposals around Combined Territories Boards, rates capping, and planning and development rules. At a Council workshop in January and again at our Council meeting on 4 February, councillors discussed the importance of understanding the bigger picture and how these changes are intended to work together.

Our focus is on making sure Horowhenua is not worse off and that decisions lead to better

outcomes without unnecessary duplication, cost, or disruption. Council has agreed the key points to include in our submissions on these reforms, and we will share the final submission once it has been lodged later this month. While this year will also see a central government election, our focus locally remains on delivering the services and support our community relies on every day.

February is a meaningful time across the district. Waitangi Day on Friday 6 February will be marked with a range of free, family friendly events, and I encourage you to visit our website to find out what is happening near you. The day will also mark the reopening of Muaūpoko Park, an important step for a place that means a great deal to our community.

This round of Community Grants and Funding is now open, supporting local people and groups who help make Horowhenua a connected and caring place to live. If you have an idea you would like to explore, visit our website to learn more about the funding available and how to apply, or get in touch with the team for advice.

Finally, there are many ways to stay connected with Council. You can download the Antenna app to receive updates and report issues, contact us directly, or speak with your councillors. Cuppa with a Councillor is also back, and for the first time there is an evening session as well as daytime options. We have heard your feedback and made this change so more people can take part. Come and have a chat, share your thoughts, and help shape what happens next. We value your voice and welcome the opportunity to hear from you.

I'm looking forward to the year ahead and to continuing the conversation with you.

Ngā mihi,

Mayor Bernie Wanden

Council Meetings

- 11 Risk and Assurance Committee**
Wednesday 11 February 2026, 10am
Council Chambers, 126 Oxford Street, Levin
- 18 Chief Executive Performance and Employment Committee (Public Excluded)**
Wednesday 18 February 2026, 10am
Council Chambers, 126 Oxford Street, Levin
- 23 Te Awahou Foxton Community Board**
Monday 23 February 2026, 6pm
Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom, Foxton
- 25 Community Wellbeing Committee**
Wednesday 25 February 2026, 10am
Council Chambers, 126 Oxford Street, Levin
- 18 Council Meeting**
Wednesday 18 March 2026, 10am
Council Chambers, 126 Oxford Street, Levin

Meeting dates and times are subject to change. Please refer to horowhenua.govt.nz/Council/Council-Meetings for the full meeting schedule, minutes and agendas.

TE AWAHOU
Waitangi Day 2026

Friday 6 February
Multiple Horowhenua locations

horowhenua.govt.nz/WaitangiDay



Strong Communities

Horowhenua DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY AT HEART

Community Grants and Funding Applications Opened 1 February 2026

horowhenua.govt.nz/grants

GRANTS & FUNDING

CUPPA WITH A COUNCILLOR

Join us for a cuppa and a chat about local topics that matter to you. We'll be boiling the kettle for anyone who wants to come along and discuss Council-related topics that are important to them.

- Levin - Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō**
Thursday 12 February from 10.30am to 12.30pm
Wednesday 25 February from 6pm to 7.30pm
- Foxton - Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom**
Thursday 12 February from 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Shannon - Shannon Library**
Thursday 12 February from 1pm to 2.30pm

In the Works

Levin Water Treatment Plant Upgrades
Council is continuing long-term upgrades to the Levin Water Treatment Plant to ensure our community has safe, reliable drinking water now and into the future.

This work is part of a 15-year, \$50 million investment programme.
Current projects include refurbishing the plant's ageing pressure filters and preparing to install a standby UV disinfection unit in 2026 to strengthen resilience. We're also planning for future improvements such as additional treated water storage and ongoing system upgrades to support growth and meet modern water quality standards.

To learn more visit:
horowhenua.govt.nz/LevinWaterTreatmentPlant



Register your business for trade waste



Calling all businesses... Anyone who operates a business or organisation at a trade premises within the Horowhenua District needs to register with Council so we can assess whether your business is producing trade waste.

Trade waste is commercial or industrial liquid waste that is discharged into our wastewater network. Some contaminants can be harmful if they are not removed before they enter the network. For example, fat from commercial kitchens

can block drains and toxic substances can be dangerous to the environment as well as people and animals.

Once you're registered, we'll let you know if you need to apply for a trade waste permit. As a rule of thumb if you run a business such as an office or shop you probably won't need a permit, but you still need to register. Businesses like restaurants or mechanical workshops probably will need a permit.

Council has extended the deadline for the consent application fee waiver to 1 March 2026. Businesses that have already registered but have yet to apply for a consent are encouraged to submit your applications for assessment. The assessment ensures you are charged at the correct risk level when annual charges in March.

Find out more:
horowhenua.govt.nz/tradewaste
tradewaste@horowhenua.govt.nz

Neat Places shines a spotlight on Horowhenua

In case you missed it, Neat Places has featured Horowhenua, showcasing some of the people and places that make our district such a great place to visit and explore.

From local favourites like The Baked Dane and Taper to the wider food, creative and hospitality scene, the feature captures the relaxed vibe, talent and warmth that locals know and love.

It's a great boost for Horowhenua, helping put our local businesses, stories and landscapes in front of a national audience. We've been sharing the content across our HorowhenuaNZ channels as part of our summer promotion, helping drive visibility during the busy season.

Photos courtesy of Neat Places.

horowhenuanz.co.nz
neatplaces.co.nz/places/horowhenua



HOROWHENUA

Download Antenno today!

Have you downloaded Antenno yet? It's the easiest way to report an issue and get up to date alerts and messages straight to your phone.

Antenno keeps you in the loop without the rumours, guesswork or someone posted it in a Facebook group. You'll get trusted local updates, emergency alerts and service notices when they matter.

See something that needs fixing? Report it in a few taps and let us handle it.

No sign ups. No spam. Just helpful local information, right on time.

www.horowhenua.govt.nz/Antenno



HOROWHENUA DISTRICT COUNCIL

Let's Move Together Triathlon

Run - Cycle - Swim

Take part in one of the biggest whānau sporting activities in Horowhenua this summer!

Sausage Sizzle | Goodie Bags | Lots of Fun | And More!

Shannon
Friday 20 February 2026
5pm to 7pm

Levin
Sunday 22 February 2026
10am to 2pm

Foxton
Sunday 1 March 2026
10am to 2pm

Categories for ages 3-5, 6-7, 8-10, 11+ Caregivers encouraged to join in!

Register online at:
aquatics.horowhenua.govt.nz