



Omarama Gazette

September 2020



Covid-19 job losses hit home

In what is a second significant blow for the Omarama community in less than six months, another major employer in town has been forced to lay off staff, this time brought on by the Covid-19 situation.

In March, Glide Omarama ceased operation with the loss of 21 jobs because of issues with the CAA over licencing and certification.

On Wednesday, the director of Otago Hotels Ltd which owns the Heritage Gateway and Countrytime hotels, Hamish Hepburn, told the Omarama Gazette 23 people had lost their jobs because of Covid-19's impact on visitor numbers.

"It's an absolute tragedy for the staff and the financial impact of the whole business given the small community it operates in."

The hotels have been closed since March 27 when alert level 4 restrictions were put in place, he said.

When asked if the situation meant the hotels might be closed for the foreseeable future, Mr Hepburn said "those are your words, not mine".

"We are in the midst of a global pandemic."

Mr Hepburn offered no further comment.

The hotel staff were told of the decision in a letter from Mr Hepburn dated August 19 sent to them by email, which was shared with the Omarama Gazette.

-continued over

Covid-19 job losses hit home - continued

"Reluctantly, it is now that with a very heavy heart I must inform you that your employment at the Hotel trading as The Heritage Gateway Hotel is at an end on the day and week ending 23 August 2020," he said in the letter.

The Covid-19 situation "globally and within New Zealand" had made a "catastrophic impact" on international and domestic tourism.

Pre-Covid-19, 75% of the Heritage Gateway Hotel guests were international travellers and hotel revenue had fallen more than 40% from late-January to March 31 because of its impact on travel, he said.

The closure of the hotel under level 4 restrictions in March and the return to level 3 in Auckland and level 2 in the rest of the country last month meant the "employment situation at the hotel had become unsustainable many months ago and now must come to an end with the end of the third round of the [wage] subsidy".

"Given the new current alert levels the hotel will remain closed for the foreseeable future," Mr Hepburn said in the letter.

"The current state of the world Covid-19 pandemic and New Zealand's move back to level 3 and level 2 have totally extinguished any hope or financial possibility of sustainable business at the hotel leading to re-opening in 2020."

"Covid- 19 is a New Zealand national and global situation we have to face up to and manage the best we can with a great deal of uncertainty in the future."

"However, at the end of October another reference point will be taken to review the current status of closed," the letter said.



Rippa Rugby stars take the cup

The Kurow Junior Rugby Under 7 Rippas have won the Phil Gard Memorial Trophy. The team of 11 and coach Kim Doree, of Omarama, were awarded the trophy for most improved team and dedication from the coach throughout the season.

Remarkably, nine of the team - Paige Doree, Angus Gloag, Toby Gloag, Paige Hunter, Liam McLeod, Lleyton McLeod, Jimmy Moore, Nelle Morgan, and Arlo Zeestraten - are from Omarama.

In its citation the club said Kim joined last season with her eldest playing Under 9 tackle rugby.

"This year she took on the coaching role of the U7 rippas with her daughter in the team. Kim did an amazing job of recruiting new players and over the past six weeks has given them all of her dedication. Kim is always willing to help, turning up to coach, support, mow lines, set up and pack down." Kim said it was "pretty humbling" to have been awarded the cup in what was a season somewhat affected by Covid-19 restrictions.

In an interesting twist, six of the nine rippa players are upholding family tradition. Angus and Toby's father, Richard Gloag, Paige's father Scott Hunter, Nelle's dad Scott Morgan and Liam and Lleyton's grandfather James Kerr have all played for the Kurow club.

The team will move to the first-year tackle grade next season.

The Phil Gard Trophy is awarded in memory of former Kurow All Black who died of cancer in June 1990 at age 42.



Ratepayers to fund free wifi in town

The Waitaki District Council is to offer ratepayer-funded wifi free to travellers and residents at three key locations in the district, including Omarama's central business area.

The service will also be installed at the Oamaru harbour and in Palmerston, and will be used primarily to connect with travellers, particularly those using the Alps 2 Ocean trail, for district-wide promotion.

The Omarama site will be at the council-owned public toilets on Chain Hills Hwy.

The move, put forward after discussion and recommendations from last week's Performance, Audit and Risk committee meeting, was approved at yesterday's additional council meeting.

It is estimated it will cost \$9200 to set up the Palmerston and Omarama sites with an additional cost of \$2600 for the first year and \$2,400 from the second year onwards. The cost to set up three sites at the Oamaru harbour is \$30,200, with an expectation \$4,500 will be spent in the first year and \$3,800 from year two.

The expected life of the assets would be about four to five years and should the project continue future running costs will be included in long term plans.

In an email, Information Services group manager Bill Chou told the Omarama Gazette the council had been "talking about this for the past five years or more", but it had not proceeded because of competing priorities.

The project was included in 2019/2020 annual plan when councillors confirmed they wanted the options for free wifi in the district explored.

Initially, the idea was to work with existing operators and providers to get a cost-effective network across the district and offer free wifi at each community along the A2O, and ultimately roll it out to all the district's smaller communities, he said.

"That has proven too difficult but we will still progress the plan, albeit at a slower rate. If we are able to work with others to expand the network more quickly, then we welcome that opportunity."

Along with promoting businesses and activities within the district to domestic and international visitors and so assist economic development it would also help residents who might not otherwise be able to access the internet.

"Now, with the impact of Covid-19, it is even more important that local citizens ... who may be struggling financially and yet need access to the internet for job search and job applications, to have an option of free access to wifi," Mr Chou said.

Speaking to his report at the Performance, Audit and Risk committee Mr Chou said, earlier this year the council had asked third parties in Waitaki and the South Island for a show of interest in providing the service but received no response, possibly because of the Covid-19 situation. So it decided to get the go ahead to take the project in-house on a reduced scale, and use Information Services resources.

In a reply to a question from Ahuriri Ward councillor Ross McRobie, Mr Chou said the reason those particular sites were chosen was because they were "strategic locations". Cr McRobie said he was concerned there would be only one site in Omarama to service the A2O trail.

"If it's a funding issue there may be other opportunities to fund the wifi particularly in Otematata - there's another body that might have funding for that," Cr McRobie said. He would like to see staff also negotiate with business owners in different towns to 'piggy-back' on their internet and so increase the number of available sites.

Mr Chou said the idea was to "limit the costs for now" to see if it "achieves what we want it to achieve".

"In the coming phases we can certainly include more locations."

The difficulty with "piggy-backing off businesses" was negotiating with individual businesses about use, particularly over concerns they may have about security.

"This is phase one of the project, we would like to see the uptake and analyse impact before we do more sites." Mr Chou said.

Cr McRobie asked why the council could not use the library wifi in Omarama.

Mr Chou said library wifi was not council-owned but provided by the APNK network.

[Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa]

To access the council's free service users would have to "go through a portal"

- accept terms and conditions - and this was the point where promotional material could be used, he said.

Mayor Gary Kircher said while there was potential to sell advertising to offset costs that idea had been rejected because the outlay involved would be more than the benefits gained. It would mean employing someone to sell advertising.

"It could take up more time than its worth," Mr Kircher said.

According to the Otago Daily Times councillors were told at yesterday's meeting the council hoped to start installing the transmitters in October, but it could take up to six months for them to be fully functional.

The installation of a free wifi service at the Omarama Public toilets would service the central business area as shown in the graphic below. Supplied: Waitaki District Council



Residents' Association urges action

The Omarama Residents' Association has thrown its weight behind a push for the New Zealand Transport Agency to make traffic safety improvements at the intersection of state highways 8 and 83.

At its meeting last month it agreed to write to NZTA and ask for prompt action on the matter which has been of concern for several years.

Plus, it is urging the agency to address other safety concerns in and around town in its future work programmes.

Any work involving state highways requires the approval of and funding from the NZTA.

Earlier this year the Waitaki District Council gave its final approval to a masterplan for Omarama's future development.

In visioning meetings and workshops held prior, the Omarama community was insistent it wanted the safety issues at the intersection fixed as a matter of urgency.

However, on the final concept plan the council noted it as a "longer term aspiration".

The issue was again raised at last month's Residents' Association meeting when additional safety concerns involving the state highways were raised.

Ahuriri Community Board chairperson Vicky Munro, who was present at the meeting, said she was aware NZTA was investigating the matter but funding would be an issue.

In late July, she met with Dunedin-based NZTA senior road safety engineer Roy Johnston to discuss matters regarding the state highways in Otematata and Omarama.

In a phone conversation, Mr Johnston told the Omarama Gazette NZTA was aware of concerns about the intersection and, including his recent visit, the agency has "had several looks over the past four to five years".

The next step was to go back to the data and "look at what we could do", he said.

It was a matter of working through the community's concerns, coming up with a solution which met council and NZTA priorities and then finding the funding to do the work.

Potentially, that could be "more challenging", he said.

"It is a standard T-intersection. There are several options for managing it."

Traffic signals would "not be the first option" and while a round-a-bout might provide a solution for vehicles it was not the only option.

One method could be to use raised platforms to guide traffic, he said.

"The current format needs to change so it's clearer where people are meant to go.

"We need to look at the issues and options and look at what we can afford."

Mr Johnston said the agency wanted to get a clearer picture of how vehicle, pedestrian and cyclists' movement was influenced, not only by the junction, but also by surrounding businesses.

"We need to get a clearer picture of risk of crash and safety.

"It's how you make sure you cater for them all."

Mr Johnston said he was "pretty positive" a solution could be found and expected the investigation would take a "couple of months" and then it was a matter of "talking to the council".

In its letter to the NZTA and the community board the Residents' Association also asked: that the island beds on SH 8 outside the Omarama School entrance be reduced in size to improve visibility and turning options for school buses and vehicles at drop off and pick up times; that LED flashing "school" signs be installed either side of the school entrance on SH8 to slow oncoming traffic; that a speed camera be considered for that zone; that steps were taken at the corner of SH8 and Quailburn Rd - the route to Clay Cliffs - to improve visibility for the increased volume of traffic turning from the highway into and out of that road; and that any landscaping plans for state highways at the town centre be carefully considered for visibility, safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other traffic, and ease of future maintenance.

JP selection "a cause for celebration"

It is clear from her background, Omarama's new Justice of the Peace "supports many in the community in many different ways" the judge said at the swearing-in ceremony. "This will only continue," he said.

Two JPs – Alona Shaw, of Omarama, and Geoff Brown, of Oamaru, were sworn in by Judge Dominic Dravitzki at a special sitting at the Oamaru District Court, last month. [Friday, August 14, 2020]

Having read Alona co-owned a supermarket, the judge noted how much those businesses were "at the hub of our community". He said the JPs role was long-standing and people were selected because they were respected by their communities. "[The role] holds rights and privileges but also responsibilities. As such it is real recognition of you as leader, of your unimpeachable honesty and integrity. It's a cause for celebration."

Although husband Blair was able to be at the ceremony, sons Matt (in Canada) and Evan (in Australia) had to message their congratulations.

Alona said it was a privilege to have been selected after completing what was a rigorous process. She and Blair were conscious, because of the constraints of their business, they were unable to volunteer in other ways, like becoming members of the fire brigade. But this was something she could do for her community.

The ceremony was notable for several reasons.

It was held under Covid-19 level two restrictions and social distancing applied.

As well, it was the first such occasion for both the registrar and the judge, who admitted to being "very nervous", North Otago Justices of the Peace Association president Warwick Ormandy said afterwards.

Judge Dravitzki began serving as a District Court judge for Timaru in March.

At a special ceremony in the Brydone Hotel after proceedings, Otematata JP Struan Munro (82) was recognised for more than 30 years of service as a JP. Several other Waitaki JPs were also recognised for their efforts.

A JP's primary role is community service and, once conferred, is for life.

Alona will not be undertaking court duties – a JP can sit in place of a judge at special hearings and receives extra training to do this.



Plough match fundraiser benefits school

There is an Omarama link to news the Lake Hawea ploughing association will get the 75th World Ploughing Championships in 2028.

The announcement was made at the association's annual plough match last month after organisers spent the past few years working on the bid.

One of the organisers and a founder of the Lake Hawea association, John Osborne, is father of Jo Golder, of Omarama.

Jo said her father, who is an agricultural contractor, is a keen ploughman who competes in reversible plough contests. He has competed in nine national finals.

She and husband Travis operate their own agricultural contracting business – T & J Golder Ltd.

Jo and Tracy Young, also of Omarama, helped Jo's mother Donella at last month's Hawea plough match serving lunches to contestants and marshals at the family property 'The Paddock' and raising \$535 for Omarama School.

Omarama School parents donated baking for the lunches.

Jo and Travis' eldest son Ashlee will attend the school from next year.

The plough match took place on Donald Urquhart's property and 19 ploughmen, one woman, and a team of horses competed.



*Ploughing contestants and officials enjoy lunch at The Paddock in Lake Hawea run as a fundraiser for Omarama School.
Photos: Jo Golder*



Impressed to open its doors

Impressed Commercial Laundry and Housekeeping is about to open its doors in Omarama

The Christchurch-based business is setting up in the former WaterForce building next to the Veterinary Centre Omarama.

Although, because of the Covid-19 situation and delays getting equipment, the opening date has been pushed back, a spokesperson for the company said. Impressed was waiting for final "council sign off" which was hoped would come through shortly so they could open their doors as soon as possible. The team was already receiving calls and emails asking about its services, she said.

Impressed, part of hospitality industry service provider, the THC Group, was set up to provide linen and housekeeping services to hotels, motels, and holiday houses. Directors Ken Harris and Mike Sharp between them have more than 50 years' experience managing a broad range of hospitality entities, from single-owner hotel properties to strata hotel and timeshare properties.

The company was excited to be expanding into Omarama and saw this as an extension of their existing commercial laundries in Tekapo and Queenstown, Mr Harris said in a statement.

"The Tekapo commercial laundry currently services the local region and takes a 'local' approach to looking after clients throughout Cromwell, Omarama, Twizel and Tekapo. Due to the large volume the Tekapo business continues to service, it required us to expand and support our customers by setting up another operation in Omarama." Mr Harris said.

"Our local staff and teams continue to support the operators and economies regionally, especially in these uncertain Covid times. We have the ability to be nimble and we are able to scale up and down ... which really helps our customers," Mr Harris said.

The company was looking forward to helping businesses in the region with commercial laundry and housekeeping services "in the very near future".



Volunteers tackle NZ's largest blaze

This week's Pukaki vegetation fire is likely to have set a dubious new record as New Zealand's largest wildfire – a record held until now by the 2019 Pigeon Valley fire. Before Monday night's welcome rain and snow halted progress the Pukaki fire which began on Sunday morning in the Twizel riverbed had spread across about 3,100 ha and had a perimeter of 31 km, aerial surveys found.

The Pigeon Valley fire near Nelson burned about 2,400ha and with 22 helicopters involved was New Zealand's largest aerial firefight on record.

At Pukaki, 18 helicopters, two fixed-wing aircraft, 14 fire appliances, eight tankers, five heavy diggers and about 150 personnel from throughout the region have worked at the scene, supported by an incident management team comprising about 25 personnel based in Twizel.

And while Monday night's welcome change in weather has done much to alleviate the risk, the fire is not yet considered contained.

Once it was contained a fire that size would be need to monitored for some considerable time to prevent flare-ups, FENZ Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade's fire chief Greg Harper said.

Greg said it was not until his crew took a break some time into fighting the fire on that first day that he realised the true scale of the blaze.

"It wasn't until we got back out and stood on the side of the canal we realised how big it was."

Fenz Omarama got the call about 11.30am on Sunday. Nine Omarama firefighters went up with two trucks and the tanker. Twizel were already on the scene having received the call at 11.25am.

"My first thoughts were, we wouldn't be coming back in a hurry," Greg said.

After getting instructions Omarama crews made their way up SH 80 to the lavender farm and from there were dispatched to try to stop the fire from crossing the road.

"We had no show of that. It was all around us. It was moving very fast."

Greg estimated it was travelling at 20kph.

"It jumped the road in front of us. We were pulled out of there, and the helicopters took over. It was all about our safety."

Then they, along with Twizel crews, were dispatched to try to protect properties.

Some people left stranded were "pulled out by helicopters", Greg said.

At the media briefing on Monday, mid-South Canterbury principal rural fire officer Rob Hands said the fire burned right around the lavender farm where the command unit was stationed.

"We are Lavender Farm Command, that's where we're based." he said.

The community there were to be congratulated for talking fire service advice and developing "defensible space" - about 30 to 40m between their properties and the "fuels that will burn", Rob said.

It was the only reason the aircraft were able to save some of those properties, he said.

Throughout Sunday Omarama crews were kept "pretty busy" and were set different tasks on different fronts, Greg said.

At first Omarama's tanker and smoke chaser were used at the fire ground but later dispatched to the Pukaki airfield to help load the fixed-wing plane based there, he said.

The Omarama crews were sent home about 7.15pm Sunday night as crews from

surrounding district arrived to take their place.
 “There have been a lot of resources thrown at it.”
 On Monday strong nor-west winds hampered attempts to contain the fire, however, helicopter crews were able to work until dusk.
 The glow from the fire could be seen from Omarama on Monday night.
 Monday night’s change in the weather came as a “huge relief”, although risks remained, Greg said.
 “This [the rain and snow] will definitely help”.
 As a result and because 4WD vehicles were needed Omarama crews were not required yesterday (Tuesday).
 But the tanker has been put on a roster and is rostered to go up again today (Wednesday), Greg said.

It was reported minor injuries were sustained by two bystanders during attempts to put out the fire when it first started.
 One property and associated outbuildings on Pukaki Downs have been lost to the fire. The Pukaki Scientific Reserve has been extensively damaged.

Greg said the numerous fires in the south over the past few days point to an early start to the fire season.
 Last week’s grass fire in Omarama which began in the reserve adjacent to the Golf Club was a “classic example” of just what kind of risk the dry conditions posed, he said.

Graphic: Mackenzie District Council



Omarama School upgrade in progress

Omarama School is in for a significant revamp following the receipt of a raft of government grants, some fundraising monies and two bequests.

Several projects to improve school facilities have just been given the go-ahead by the Board of Trustees, principal Bevan Newlands said.

Late last year the Government gave eligible schools throughout the country extra funding to upgrade classrooms and make other property improvements.

At Omarama School a new classroom is to be built, the tennis court is to be resurfaced, and the schoolhouse is to be re-roofed and painted. Garden renovations are already underway.

The documentation and plans for the school extensions were with the designers, Bevan said. See more of the plan overleaf.

Although it is too soon to have a definite timeline it was hoped work on this might begin about middle of next year.

The resurfacing of the courts should be completed by the end of this year, he said.

The Government is giving \$50,000 from its Schools Investment Package to improve the courts, with the Board of Trustees and Friends of the School adding their support taking it \$70,000, Bevan said.

A new mat product, "nice and bouncy", and similar to that used at the Margaret Mahy playground in Christchurch will be used.

The school court will be "play-focused" and complements Omarama's sports facility, which is now used for sports practices.



This project was set to go, it was just a matter of waiting for the Ministry of Education to “dot the ‘i’s and cross the ‘t’s”, he said.

Already underway is a project to renovate the school gardens and frontage.

Bequests from the late Ron Blackstock and Ray Menzies will be used to be used to stone-clad the concrete frontage of the school building. There will be new signage for the building and new plantings for the gardens.

School parent Jemma Gloag was driving this project, Bevan said.

Working bees have been held to prepare and replant garden plots.

A viburnum hedge has been planted at the perimeter fence.

Dogwoods – Cornus ‘Eddies White Wonder’ - and the purple smoke bush Cotinus purpurea line the path into the school.

Small conifers – Thuja - and lavender, rosemary and Alchemilla mollis have been planed in the plot outside the staff room.

(Read more in the Omarama School report)

Photos

This page:

Omarama school principal Bevan Newlands stands at the entrance to the school which is about to be upgraded.

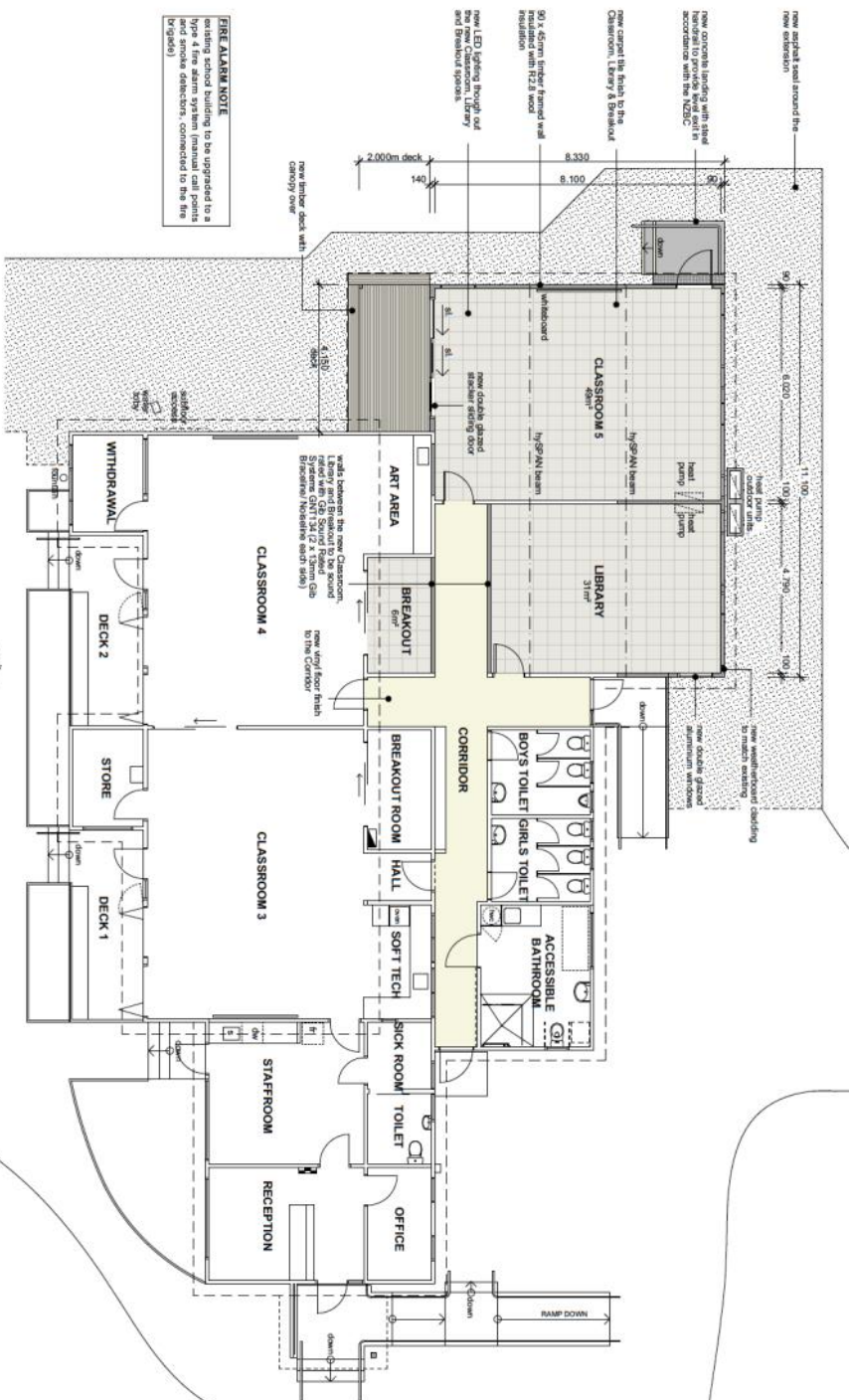
Max Gloag helps with the planting.

Overleaf:

A proposed plan for the school extensions is about to get the final sign-off.

Parents and children help with the garden renovations





SKETCH SCHEME 1
DO NOT SCALE OFF DRAWINGS. DIMENSIONS TO BE VERIFIED ON SITE PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION



Glide Omarama to end operations

Glide Omarama has confirmed, after 22 years of operations, it is unlikely to resume operating from the Omarama Airfield in the near future.

In a statement on the company's Facebook page owner Gavin Wills said it had been "an incredibly challenging six months for us on many fronts".

Apart from the Civil Aviation's insistence it re-certify and re-licence its pilots to continue "adventure aviation" where previously it had operated under a recreational aviation certificate exemption, "Covid-19 turned the world upside down" and there was the "further hurdle" of the Omarama Airfield Company's decision to allow more than one operator rights to use the airfield.

"Despite our existing legal rights to an exclusive license to operate commercial gliding from the airfield, they have proceeded to advertise for new commercial operators.

Gavin said despite some newfound local interest in gliding, many of our regular overseas clients and team were unable to travel for the 20/21 season.

"As a result of all of the above, there really is no choice but to suspend operations from the Omarama Airfield until further notice.

"I myself have retired and handed over the business assets and affairs to my son George in the hope that he can pull together new leadership and a future for what we have built over the last 22 years in Omarama.

"In the meantime, I am preparing all of the equipment for sale including gliders, tow-planes, hangers, and ancillary equipment, as well as writing a book," Mr Wills said.



Omarama Airfield Company chairman Clive Geddes confirmed yesterday, in addition to the three parties already granted licences to operate from the airfield, Omarama Soaring (2020), an organisation formed by long-term Omarama-based pilots, has also been given a licence.

"They are currently obtaining the relevant CAA pilot qualifications and confirming the availability of gliders.

"Our understanding is the other applicant is not going to proceed but we are awaiting their written confirmation of that." Mr Geddes said.

The other parties granted a licence to operate gliding and other services last month are the Omarama Gliding Club, Youth Glide New Zealand - for winch launching, and Omarama Launch Services - operated by pilots Phil Plane and Brad Newfield, for winch and aerotow launch services; and Gavin Wrigley who will offer microlight training services.

In late news...



2020 Ahuriri Community Board By-election

DECLARATION OF RESULT

The final result for the by-election that closed at mid-day on Tuesday 1 September 2020 is:

Ahuriri Community Board (1 vacancy)

Votes Received

DALLEY, Steve 335

BUTCHER, Fliss 110

INFORMAL 0

BLANK VOTING PAPERS 2

Steve DALLEY is declared elected.

The voter return was 39.31%, being 447 votes.

Anthony Morton

Electoral Officer

Waitaki District Council

DAFFODIL DAY 2020

Sunshine, daffodils and Shona Smith and Bev Purvis were outside Four Square Omarama to greet people on Daffodil Day, last month.

All up \$847.70 was raised. Thank you to all



The Noticeboard



To have your community notice included here email: omaramagazette@gmail.com

Our sincere condolences to Sally and Deanna Fodie and their family and friends on the recent death of Tony. Tony died at Christchurch Hospital Care unit with Sally and Deanna at his side.

Our sincere condolences to family and friends of Allanah Walker.

Kurow Medical Centre Omarama Clinic at the Omarama Community Centre, is open Tuesdays, 8.30am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm. To make appointments for all clinics, order repeat scripts or make enquiries please contact Kurow Medical Centre 03

436 0760 (Monday to Thursdays). www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz

St Thomas' Omarama Church Community: Services and communion are held on a regular basis, usually monthly at 10.30am on the Friday of the second weekend of the month at the home of a parishioner.

Contact: Kay Verheul 03 438 9538.

The Omarama Community Library is open 9am to 10am Wednesdays and Saturdays, Library hours can change. Contact Yvonne: 027 476 7473.

The Omarama Golf Club Saturdays, cards in 12noon, tee-off 12.30pm. Club Captain Adrian Tuffley, 027 347 8276. www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

Omarama Playgroup meets at 9.30am each Wednesday during the primary school term at the Omarama Community Centre.

For more information phone president Andrea Aubrey, 03 438 9863; vice president Ruby Milestone, 03 438 9401, secretary Carla Hunter, 03 976 0504

The Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month at the 'Top Pub' - the Blue and Gold pub, in Kurow. All welcome. Join the Facebook group.

Bridge Club - The Omarama Bridge Club meets on a regular basis and would welcome new members. If you are interested please phone Sylvia Anderson 438 9784 or Ann Patterson 438 9493.

The Kurow Medical Centre holds a clinic 8.30am to 1pm, and 2pm to 5pm, on Tuesdays at the Omarama Community Centre. Please phone Kurow Medical Centre, 03 436 0760, for appointments. On Fridays phone 0274 347 464 because the Kurow Centre is closed.

The Omarama Model Aircraft Club meets on Saturdays from 9.00 am to 12.00 noon at its flying ground at the Omarama airfield. All welcome - Contact Don Selbie on 027 435 5516.

FENZ Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets 7pm each Wednesday and has its meeting at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month. New members welcome.

Plunket Line: 0800 933 922

Omarama Plunket Committee: Petrina Paton 027 345 6192

Car Seat Rentals: Christine, phone: 03 435 0557 or 027 208 0362

Breastfeeding Works: Claire Hargest-Slade 03 684 3625, 021 493 863
clairhs@me.com

In case of emergency: to prevent any confusion about the location of Lake Ohau Alpine Village in an emergency, the following points should be noted:

When phoning 111, advise that Lake Ohau is in South Island and the nearest cross road is State Highway 8 and Lake Ohau Road. Also mention that Lake Ohau Alpine Village is on the shore of Lake Ohau, and is 20 mins (40 km) from both Twizel and Omarama. This will assist the operator to find the required information to enter location in the system and allowing the call to progress to the next screen in the system.

To read more, enjoy more photos and watch our place 'come to life' check out our Facebook page and website. www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/ omaramagazette.nz

To receive email alerts between monthly editions of the Omarama Gazette sign up to our 'Local List'. Email omaramagazette@gmail.com and put 'Local List' in the subject line.

Thank you to all who share your stories and contribute in other way to the Gazette. We all really appreciate what you do.

**The October issue of the
Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, October 7 , 2020.**

**Please submit copy
by October 2.**

**Advertising pays for
production and distribution.**

**To find out about publication and close-off dates,
and how much it costs to place your advertisement,
please phone 021 294 8002, 03 438 9766 or
email omaramagazette@gmail.com**

Invitation to apply for

COMMUNITY GROUP GRANTS



Could your community group
use a funding boost towards
a special project? Big or small:
WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

APPLICATIONS OPEN 17 AUGUST 2020

Applications close 18 September 2020

All information, including application forms, can be found at www.waitaki.govt.nz,
Council offices in Palmerston and Oamaru, and at all Waitaki district public libraries.



www.waitaki.govt.nz



Waitaki

DISTRICT COUNCIL
TE KAUNIHERA Ā ROHE O WAITAKI

The Community Reports

FENZ Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade



Hi everyone

The first day of spring and the first snow for the year - some relief for the crews fighting the fire at Pukaki Downs, and for all of us some short term relief from the dry conditions we are experiencing.

We had a small fire in the reserve land adjacent to the golf course a few days ago.

It was lucky it was a calm day or the situation could have been a lot different so please be careful if you are burning any fires including rubbish drums for those that are allowed to. Remember even a drum must be 50m away

from your boundary which means we can't have a rubbish fire if we live in a built up area.

There have been a number of house fires throughout the country in the last few months caused by device chargers, so please make sure you are about when charging phones laptops etc. including tools, and switch off when not in use. Try not to charge over night and place devices on hard surfaces to help reduce the risk.

A timely reminder daylight saving this month and time to check our smoke alarms. Remember if you have any problems please don't hesitate to get in touch and we will come and assist you. Smoke alarms save lives.

- Keep yourselves safe. Chief Fire Officer Greg Harper

FENZ Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets 7pm each Wednesday and has its meeting at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month

St Thomas's Church Community

Upcoming meetings:

The next meeting of the St. Thomas's Joint Management Committee

will be 12.30 pm Friday, September 18

at the Omarama Memorial Hall.

Annual meeting

The annual meeting will be 2pm on the same day,

also at the Omarama Memorial Hall.

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03 438 7855 021 438745



Georgie Robertson
Omarama
03 438 9554 027 4861525



Alona Shaw
Omarama
027 773 4241

Omarama Community Library

On behalf of Waitaki District Libraries I am now able to report on the decision that has been made regarding the future of the Ōmārama Community Library. Following consultation and the inspection of two possible sites to better serve the community and visitors to the area it has been decided that the library be moved into the Ōmārama Community Hall's meeting room.

This will allow for a sunnier space with room for an enlarged collection of resources. Additional shelving is presently being sourced and once this has been installed the existing library collections will be moved out of its present space (the rooms properly allocated as a Doctor's surgery) with some additional refurbishment to enhance the area. - *Jean Rivett, Community Services Librarian*

Contact: Yvonne Jones 027 476 7473.

**The Omarama Community Library
is open 9am to 10am,
Wednesdays and Saturdays at the
Omarama Community Centre.**



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Notary Public Services Affidavits and Declarations

David Stone, Lake Ohau

03 438 9653, 027 490 9118, david@stone.org.nz



By Bevan Newlands, principal Photos: supplied

Covid has made its return and it's full effects are being felt throughout the community. I wish all those people and business all the very best in what is a challenging and uncertain time.

At school we are continuing to focus on personal hygiene and keeping ourselves safe. You will also notice that we now have the NZ Covid Tracer App QR Code post at the tennis court entrance and on the office door. Please be aware that if you enter the school grounds, unfortunately this includes the tennis court area and outside, you

are required to either use the NZ Covid Tracer App via your QR Code or sign in at the office. This is a directive from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

Cross Country

We were very lucky to sneak this in before the level 2 restriction came into being. It was a hugely successful day and I was massively impressed with all our students who came across the finish line looking as if they had given it their 100%.



Well done to those students who placed in their respective age groups. Congratulation to the following students who placed in the top 6 for their year groups and would have qualified through the North Otago Cross Country. (The NO cross country has been cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions)

Results: Year 1 Boys, Toby Gloag 1; Year 1 Girls, Jesse Ralston 1; Year 2 Girls, Paige Hunter 6; Year 3 Boys, Jimmy Moore 6; Year 3 Girls, Lucy Radford 5; Year 4 Boys, Jack Bochel 4; Year 4 Boys, Robbie Anderson 6; Year 4 Girls, Nicole McMurtrie 1; Year 4 Girls, Amelia Wilson 6; Year 5 Boys, Jack Doree 1; Year 5 Girls, Isla McLeod 1; Year 5 Girls, Maggie Radford 5; Year 6 Boys, Archie Bochel 3; Year 6 Girls, – Pippa Anderson 5; Year 8 Boys, Toby Bochel 5. Thank you to all those involved in last weeks cross-country: Friends of the School Committee – BBQ; Omarama Golf Club – Venue; Jimmy Courtney – Transporting Porta Loos; Geva Innes – First Responder

Front of school garden - Working Bee

Thank you to a small but dedicated group of parents who spent Saturday redesigning the garden out the front of school. Removing overgrown bushes and trees has really opened up the area. We look forward to more green spaces and a circular seat around the large tree for shade during our hot summers.

Thank you to Jemma Gloag who has been driving this project. A big thank you to the following for their help on Saturday; Richard Gloag, Emma and Andy Moore, Mike and Kim Doree, Mark and Ruby Ralston and Hank Verheul. Also, Grant Murdoch for the generous donation of digger hours and Farmlands Kurow for grass seed.

Network Waitaki Light Bulbs - Last week, John Clements visited me from The Waitaki Power Trust. They are distributing Eco-light bulbs and have asked the school to be a distribution point. These bulbs are very low wattage, only 7 watts. Each household in district has been offered free light bulbs. There are a selection of screw and bayonetted bulbs. Please seen Ang to collect your free light bulbs.

*Room 2 show off their alien art and alien faces
Room 1 display their models of the solar system,
Alex and Toby C work on their disaster models,
Room 4 Enjoy PE with Youth Town.*



Omarama Residents' Association

From the August meeting...

There were 13 people present

Library - The committee has agreed to the signing of the library lease. Jean Rivett, from Waitaki Libraries, was concerned about the low number of items issued and people not using library. She was also concerned about the number of volunteers.

Residents' association secretary Yvonne Jones (who is also a library volunteer) advised that the number of people volunteering at the library at the moment is actually good and the reason the library is not being used as much as it could be, is because there is not the selection of books available. Sometimes, there is only one book by an author which can be frustrating for some readers. Teenage books are sparse and this needs to be looked into. Committee member Kay Verheul felt the library should be in the Church building. Association chairperson Tony Chapman is to discuss with Waitaki Libraries manager Philip van Zijl.

The Oasis is happy with the info centre in their café and also would be happy to have a video TV in their window for tourism purposes.

The roller door in the kitchen servery needs maintenance. There is a patch of grass outside in the playground needs re-grassing. Ann Patterson advised she has grass seed and Tony will re-sow.

Medical waste has been disposed of in the bin in the toilets possibly by a patient. Doctors need to ensure these bins are emptied.

Resident Jimmy Courtney raised several safety issues that he has become aware of regarding state highways in and around town. There are:

- The garden outside the school could do with being reduced to give more room for the school buses to turn as when parents park there the buses cannot back up due to safety of the pupils.

- A LED School flashing sign could be a good idea as the traffic travelling along SH8 is not always compliant with the 50kph speed limit.

- The Quailburn Rd and State Highway 8 junction is dangerous and on a blind corner. The bank needs to be cut back to allow visibility.

NZTA is already looking into the junction of SH8 and SH83 at the T-Junction to see how this can be made safer, and discussion is taking place regarding a round-a-bout at the junction.

The Association agreed to send letter to the Ahuriri Community Board and also NZTA regarding the safety aspects raised at the meeting.

Otago Community Trust Meeting has been cancelled.

Ahuriri Community Board member Vicky Munro advised that a couple people had approached her regarding rates increases. One had a rate increase of 73% and another of \$1,500. Both these properties have more than one self-contained unit. The board will be following this up with the council.

School hockey practice is now being held on the Sports Courts.

The next meeting is

7.30pm Thursday, September 16, 2020.

An invitation is extended to all

Contacts: Tony Chapman, chairperson, 027 242 8605.

Yvonne Jones, secretary, 027 476 7473.

THE ASSOCIATION HAS ITS OWN POST OFFICE BOX

Could all those who want to contact the association by mail, send accounts to be paid, or have correspondence considered at the monthly meetings ensure it is addressed to:

The Secretary, P O Box 93, Omarama 9448.
The association's email address
is omarama.committee@gmail.com

OMARAMA COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL HIRE

To make a booking for an upcoming event or for more information about hall hire and availability please contact Charlotte Newfield, 027 940 1648, or email charlotte.omarama@gmail.com
Keys and fobs are collected from Charlotte



Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Omarama Residents' Association Inc is 7.30 pm, Thursday, October 15, 2020
at the Omarama Community Centre
All are welcome

- * Yes, we fundraise - it's fun.
- * Help plan and build sports courts for our community
- * Help care for our Community Centre and Memorial Hall
- * Join to lobby on issues we care about

It's about all of us
Let's work together to make the difference

One meeting, one hour, once a month

Omarama is at the heart of what we do

The Waitaki Newcomers Network

The Newcomers Network are Migrant Support service are supported by the Waitaki Multicultural Council who fund both services and employ me. There is an opportunity to become a member of that group for \$10 per person, per year, which just provides a bit of financial support. Many times, people have asked how they can donate money to the service and for those of you who would like to pay a kind of annual sub, you are very welcome to donate.

Membership to the Waitaki Multicultural Council

We value your membership which assists us to provide support for the wider community. Membership entitles you to: ☐ Voting rights ☐ Eligibility for election to the Executive Committee Annual Subscription (for the financial period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021) is \$10 per family or \$25 an organisation. Or a donation can be made of any amount.

Online Banking Bank Details

Waitaki Multicultural Council Kiwi bank 03 0937 0437957 00

Please include your name as a reference.

The Waitaki Multicultural Council is also having their AGM soon.

All positions are filled, so you don't need to worry about getting a job, if you come along. However, if you would like to be involved there is also space for more people on the committee. Think about coming and meeting the term and hearing the annual reports. It might be particularly interesting for those of you who volunteer so willingly for the network.

Enjoy the week and let's hope we will soon be back at level one, so we can all meet up again. In the meantime, only walking groups and IELTS class will run.

Christine Dorsey

027 242 8643

The Otematata Chronicle

is published on the third Wednesday of each month.

The next issue is Wednesday, September 16, 2020

The close-off for this is Friday, September 11

The Chronicle is emailed to subscribers.

If you would like to subscribe please:

email otematatachronicle@gmail.com or phone 021 294 8002



Waitaki District Council - news in brief

To find out about Waitaki District Council support for businesses and the community following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions go to its website.

Waitaki district to receive \$7.4m for water projects

- projects in Omarama, Otematata and Ohau.

Last month, the council signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding with the Crown to begin work on the 3 Waters Reform programme – designed to improve the regulation and supply arrangements of drinking water, wastewater and storm-water

As part of this the Waitaki District Council has received \$3.73m directly and is likely to receive \$3.69m through the Canterbury Regional allocation, giving a total of \$7.42m to be spent in the Waitaki.

Further to this, Waitaki District Council today agreed to approve a Programme of Works to spend the \$6.74m of infrastructure investment throughout the Waitaki district.

This includes \$1.4m for water treatment upgrades in Oamarama, \$200k for more water storage in Duntroon and Otematata, \$500k for improvements to campground water supplies, \$500k each in Weston and Otematata for water mains, \$500k for various electrical upgrades, \$300k for watermain at Robbs Crossing, \$100k for a new tank liner at Omarama, \$100k each for wastewater planning at Duntroon and Moeraki and \$100k for sewer improvements at Ohau.

This work is additional to what is already planned for the year.

A sum of \$300k has been set aside from the grant funding for the relocation of the 3 Waters Team from council headquarters to a commercial leased premise, which includes lease and operating costs for a two-year period and \$350k to bring forward the planned employment of three additional 3 Waters staff.

Phone: 03 433 0300

Automated options after hours

E-mail: service@waitaki.govt.nz

www.waitaki.govt.nz

The next
Ahuriri Community Board meeting

**is 3.15pm
Monday, September 7, 2020**

at the Duntroon Community Hall

Minutes and agendas can be found here
<http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-council/council-meetings/agendas-and-minutes/Pages/default.aspx>

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Council offices in Palmerston and Oamaru, and at all Waitaki district public libraries.

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TE Kaitiaki o Waitaki

Wilding pine operation on the Benmore peninsula

Work is well underway to remove wilding pines from the Benmore Peninsula. The work is funded by the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme. Meridian Energy and Land Information New Zealand separately own and manage adjoining areas of land on the peninsula. ECan will oversee the work on their behalf and it will be carried out by forestry company, PF Olsen. The aim is to harvest the pines for timber, which in turn reduces the cost of control.

Work is expected to finish in February 2021.

Meridian Energy to plant 'Forever Forests' at Waitaki sites

Meridian Energy is to replant its sites cleared of wilding pines and poplars with sterile *pinus attenuata* hybrid and totara as part of its 'Forever Forests' planting programme. As well it will be trialling other natives such as ribbonwood, native cypress and mountain beech in the appropriate sites, it says in a statement.

"The *pinus attenuata* hybrid looks like your average pine tree, however they are sterile and thus unable to spread. This sterile tree species is inexpensive, about 50c a stem, are suited to harsh conditions and are of commercial value at maturity.

"This gives us the best of both worlds, a hardy nursery crop for regenerating native forest, carbon sequestration and then a commercial return."

Two Waitaki sites have been chosen for the plantings.

The Benmore site is a 20ha site at the east of the dam and the Aviemore site is 10ha in size and sits to the north downstream of the dam spillway.

To find out more go to

<https://www.meridianenergy.co.nz/who-we-are/community-support/forever-forests>

The next meeting of Environment Canterbury's

Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee

is at 9.30am, Friday, September 18, 2020

at the Tekapo Hall, 8 Aorangi Crescent, Lake Tekapo

Minutes and agendas are posted at:

<https://ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/water/whats-happening-in-my-water-zone/upper-waitaki-water-zone/>

www.ecan.govt.nz

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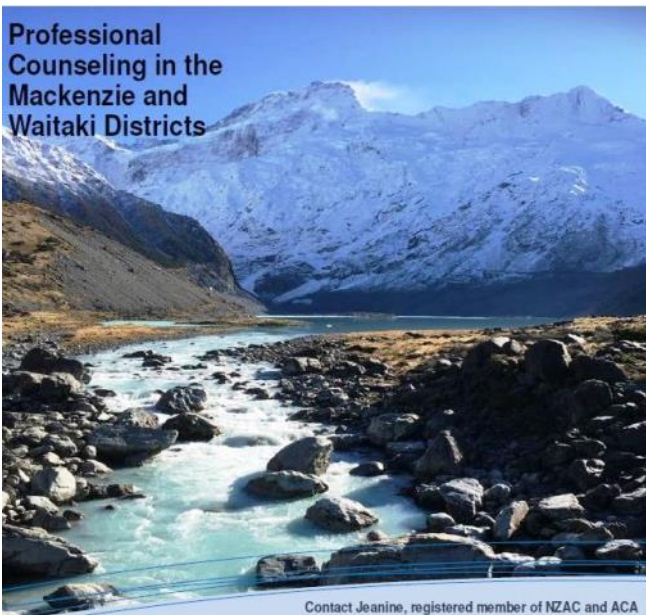
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August 2020

Highest temperature: August 30, 18.9 C

Lowest temperature: August 17, - 7.2 C

Most rainfall: August 19, 2 mm

Total rainfall for August: 5.9 mm

The Garden Diary - Digging deep and pushing through

The garden doesn't know what's happening out there.

It's just pushing on with its job regardless, and that is: spring.

We have hardly had a winter and the spring rains can't come soon enough.

(Update - there has been 31mm of rain overnight and a snowfall!)

Here watering has begun because between the lack of rain and 'frost curing' the soil is dust.

The leaves on the Rhodo look dangerously parched and continue to droop dramatically even after a soaking. I can't remember her name - is it 'Cowslip'? But she's a beauty and will leave a big gap in springtime if she succumbs.

What if the equinox winds arrive without rain?

It's scary to think about what lies ahead. Is it to be a spring like no other, also?

Will spring last only a matter of weeks before heat and wind force plants to bolt and run to get through their to do lists?

This might be a little garden but there is much to do in spring...and that's a bonus.

A wise high-country poet I know Jim Morris once said a cure to fixing most things is - *"Hard work and lots of love"*.

That's how you push through.

I usually wait until spring to clear away the late autumn and winter detritus.

I like how sculptural the fading perennials look under frost and snow.

And in late-winter early-spring often just a gentle tug is all that's needed to pull away last season's production.

Here the leaf litter protects anything that shoots away too early from being bitten back by cold.

Plus, it provides refuge for good bugs and bumble bees.

Another bonus is the self-sown seedlings which just pop up; unlike my attempts they usually get the timing right, are tougher than the rest and so get a good head start.

Where there's a will there's a way.

I witnessed a tiny miracle of persistence the other day.

I went to pull weeds and windblown leaves jammed between the concrete of the path and wall and there was a crocus blooming its heart out.

So many questions I wanted to ask it...Yeah, I talk to plants!

How did you get there? What made you think you could even put down roots in that tight spot let alone squeeze in a round fat bulb? And, well done, you're first to flower.

I've realised the plants I admire most are not those rare and beautiful creatures, captivating though they are.

But just so-called 'ordinary' plants, putting down roots, pushing up stems, getting on with the job. I do so wish I was that focused.

No sitting around feeling miserable wishing life was different. No, "Why am I here? I can't work with this!"

Those that just do their plant thing and bloom, regardless.

These are plants that break stone.

- Ruth Grundy

(I garden a small space under a big sky
in Omarama)



The Last Page is Classifieds

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