



Council News

a newsletter from the Clutha District Council



May 2020

www.cluthadc.govt.nz

0800 801 350

help.desk@cluthadc.govt.nz

From the Mayor

Like many of you I have been challenged to comprehend the enormity of events in recent weeks and the only thing that seems certain is that our lives shall never be the same.



Consequently as I attempt to give a helicopter view of where Council is at, it must be taken in the context that with the speed this scourge is altering our communities and economy and the fact that I am compiling this in the second week of lockdown I think its fair to say my comments are only indicative of councils position and intent.

Every single facet of council's functions has been disrupted, but the one thing that will not change is the commitment we make to having the wellbeing and health of our district paramount in our thoughts.

One discussion point has been around the setting of next financial years rates, it would be premature of me to give definitive figures, but Central Government has indicated that councils are to continue with their Annual plan processes. We were already predicting the lowest increase of any Council I

am aware of, and I have no doubt that as a team we will be seeking sensible savings, while keeping an ever-watchful eye on ensuring core services are maintained.

There is a balance needed here as we do not want to slam our district into further retrenchment but must also acknowledge present realities, and like never before I implore you all to actively participate in this years annual plan process and assist us in articulating the needs of our district.

Of more pressing consideration is the immediacy of identifying relief options available for the more imminent final instalment for this year's rates, and that is where our focus presently lies.

I want to make a special acknowledgement and heart felt thanks to our Civil Defence team. This cohesive response team, made up of both volunteers and professionals, are working 24 / 7 to ensure our safety is maintained. Their capabilities are being constantly refined to ensure they can responded to whatever the future holds and we all owe a huge debt of gratitude to this team. Let's hope that many of their contingency plans are never needed, but they are the rock we can all lean on and, on behalf of our District, I thank them all for their dedication and professionalism.

In conclusion I think we still need to hold on to the positives, our economy was in exceptionally robust form coming into this pandemic, I believe we are reaping benefits of resilience and cohesion that is symptomatic of rural communities, and we will get through this. Please keep reaching out and contacting those around you, stay safe in your bubble, and good health to you all.

Worried about this rates bill?

The Covid19 pandemic is changing the world as we know it. The immediate impacts are being felt but the medium and long-term impacts are not yet understood. We know that this is a financially uncertain time for many people, even with the Government's injection into salaries and wages to help ensure that essential household bills be paid.

While we understand that some people are suffering financially at this time, it is important to note that many of the things Council does are essential services necessary to keep our communities healthy, safe and operating.

Please do not just stop paying your rates or cancel your direct debit. If you are experiencing hardship because of Covid-19, please contact us to discuss and

arrange a payment plan. Please do this as soon as possible.

Where financial hardship is being experienced because of Covid-19 we can arrange that penalties for late payment of this rates instalment (instalment 4) will be 'remitted' (ie written off).



We also understand that with our offices closed some people will be anxious about how to pay this rates instalment. There are some options that are easy to organise from home.

Direct Debit: contact us and request a direct debit form. This is an easy way to pay your rates if you have a bank account. The advantages are:

- you can pay either monthly or quarterly, weekly or fortnightly.
- The calculated amount will be debited to your bank account on a Wednesday for weekly and fortnightly payments,

on the 20th of each month (or the nearest working day following the 20th) for monthly payments, or on the instalment due date for quarterly instalments.

- You will receive a rates notice for each instalment.

Telephone banking: most banks offer telephone banking. All you need is a bank account and a telephone. Call your bank for details about this service if you think this would work best for you.



Other methods: please refer to the back of your rates notice for other payment options such as automatic payments, or online payments. Please note you can only use a credit card to pay online.

Contact our Rates Department at: 0800 801 350 or email: rates@cluthadc.govt.nz

And, finally...

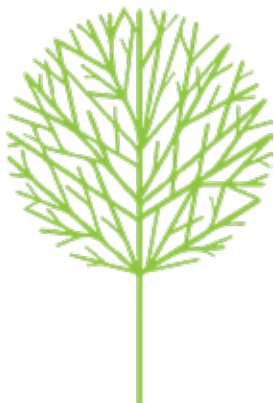
As we write this newsletter, we are only in week 2 of the COVID-19 lock down. In the coming weeks we do not know how things are going to develop, or where the country will be by the time you are reading this.



However, there are some messages that will still be important:

WELFARE: no-one should be struggling with essential needs while in lock down. Anyone can call 0800 322 4000 and Civil Defence Welfare will be there to help.

DOGS: for many of us, our dogs are saving our sanity. Just remember while you're out walking them to keep them on a leash and to always pick up after them. This will mean that you don't risk bursting anyone's



Paying online...

When you are paying your rates online please check that you have the reference details correct.

- If you are paying your rates, use your valuation number as the reference.
- If you are making a Water Billing payment online the reference is also your valuation number.
- If you are paying a Council Sundry Invoice, change the reference to Customer ID and/or invoice number.

For more information just ring Council on 0800 801 350.

bubble if your dog gets into an altercation with another animal, and our walks and parks stay nice for all of us to use.

STAY IN TOUCH: Think about those around you. Check in with someone you haven't talked to for a while, schedule an online chat, do whatever works for you and doesn't mean breaking any bubbles, to help those around you stay connected.

KEEP UP TO DATE: Council's website and the government's website (covid19.govt.nz) are updated with current information - if in doubt, check for the latest updates.