

THE HUBBUB

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Newsletter for Richmond Ward
– Tasman District

Technology to help clear the air



Images taken from the camera on the Barnicoat Range overlooking the town.

Tasman District Council has invested in a new state-of-the-art digital camera to help in the battle to tackle Richmond's air quality issues.

The camera, which has been installed on the Barnicoat Range overlooking the town, is being used to help monitor smog and understand aspects of its development such as its thickness and height above the ground.

The information, along with meteorological data, will be analysed to generate a map showing average air pollution levels. Areas with particular pollution problems can then be targeted.

The results of this improved monitoring can be watched by members of the public via the Environment section of Council's website (www.tdc.govt.nz). It includes hourly updates of the measurements taken to determine the levels of harmful particles in the air.

Richmond has some of the worst air quality in New Zealand. For more than a third of the winter months last year the level of harmful microscopic particles were above acceptable levels, mainly a result of wood and coal burners used in domestic properties.

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Meet the Ward Councillors

Richmond residents can meet their ward councillors on Tuesday 19 June, at 7.30pm in the Tasman District Council Chambers, Queen St, Richmond.

Meet the Richmond Ward Councillors is organised and chaired by Richmond Community Forum. The purpose of the informal 'Meet the Councillors' forum is to exchange information and views on the concerns and issues that affect us all in the Richmond Ward.

Take the time to come along and meet the team that represents your interests.



“It’s estimated that six people in Richmond die prematurely each year as a result of the air pollution,” said Tasman District Council’s resource scientist Trevor James.

“One of the reasons smoke levels build up in Richmond is due to the combination of the stillness of the air, the meteorological conditions and the geography of the area.



“The air gets trapped against the hills and since the breezes are generally only light and tend to move back and forth a short distance over 24 hours the air rarely gets refreshed. It is especially bad during the night as the cold air falls, trapping the pollution near the ground.”

The Council has taken a number of measures in a bid to tackle this problem. One of these includes new rules about the use of wood burners when a house changes ownership within a designated perimeter of Richmond Town Centre. As long as the burner in the house complies with strict requirements the new owners can continue to use it. If however it doesn’t comply, the new owners are obliged to replace the existing burner with either an approved clean air wood burner or a clean heat system. A list of authorized solid fuel burners is available from Council and also from the website, as are details of local good wood suppliers.

“By 2013 Richmond must comply with the National Environmental Standard (NES) for air quality, whereby the unacceptable levels must not be exceeded for more than one day a year,” said Mr James. “It is marginal whether Richmond will achieve this, even with the new rules.

“It’s important that everybody does their bit. Like recycling, efforts may feel small but every improvement counts and combined, everyone can tackle this problem.”

Basic steps to remember

When lighting a fire, make sure you:

- Never use wet or green wood (a list of good wood suppliers is available from Council and also from the website)
- Use enough kindling
- Don’t put too much firewood in at first
- * Stack wood loosely in the firebox so air can circulate

Once the fire is alight make sure you:

- Keep the fire burning brightly

- Keep the air control open for at least 30 minutes
- Burn smaller logs rather than trying to burn a single, large log
- If you add logs, open up the air control to high for at least 20-30 minutes before turning down.
- Be careful not to block air supply to the base of the fire with a badly positioned log.
- Don’t damp down the fire
- Don’t burn rubbish in the fire

Richmond’s town centre

Councillors and council engineers completed the final consultation process with shopkeepers and stakeholders on 21 May for the proposed plans to create a new focal point in Richmond’s town centre.

The plans involve re-landscaping of the area where Croucher Street meets Queen Street. The proposals involve a more pedestrian friendly zone with one-way traffic leading off from Queen Street towards McGlashen Avenue, with more grassed areas and covered seating.

It is hoped the area will become a meeting place, with facilities for concerts and events.

Designs will now go to Council for discussion and approval.

The work, which is due to start in February 2008, is expected to take five months to complete at a cost of about \$2.3million.



The Richmond town centre development will provide a better venue for concerts and community events such as the Last of the Summer Fare (pictured).



Walking track improvements welcomed



Richmond's network of walkways is even more extensive thanks to recent work by Keep Richmond Beautiful (KRB) to improve the track that links Templemore Drive to Welsh Place.

The upgrade, which was headed by project leader John Sutherland, has improved the path from a grassy bank to a level, graveled track, which makes it accessible all year round, even in the wetter months.

It took a digger, roller and a team of seven volunteers from KRB 10 days to complete the upgrade of the final section from the bridge at the rear of Stillwater Gardens to the playground on Welsh Place.

The 500m section of path has been a popular shortcut for students from Waimea College as it borders the school grounds. It is also used widely by recreational walkers.

Chairman of KRB Ray Henman said the upgrade had been widely welcomed. "It would become very muddy during the winter months so we've had some great feedback already. As well as being a beautiful trail it provides a safer alternative route away from traffic."

KRB also plans to plant shrubs alongside the path.

"We've been unable to do so yet due to the dry weather but hope that we'll be able to complete the landscaping over the next month or so," Mr Henman said.

The upgrade of the track completes the final section of a circuit walk that is ideal for a leisurely Sunday stroll with the family. It is now accessible to those with all-terrain pushchairs and also to cyclists.

Walking route...

Starting from Templemore Pond, follow the pathway towards the Richmond Hills that skirts around to the right hand side of Stillwater Gardens. Across the bridge the path leads to a playground by Welsh Place and then weaves up to Hill Street, following Reservoir Creek. At Hill Street turn left and walk past the yellow pathway sign until you reach Meadow Lane on the left. Next to Meadow Lane is a small footbridge across a stream. Cross the footbridge and follow the gravel track that weaves along the pretty unnamed branch of Reservoir Creek back to the pond. This is about a 2km stroll. To extend the walk, at Templemore Pond follow the track that leads to the ASB Aquatic Centre, feeding the ducks along the way.

Keep an eye open for wildlife. It's not unknown to spot plover on this route.

A map 'Way to go Richmond, urban walking and cycling links' is available from the Council offices, which details a number of weekend walks and useful weekday shortcuts.

Forum takes action on air quality

Members of the Richmond Community Forum are concerned about the quality of air in Richmond and have started making enquiries about the emissions from the MDF factory in lower Queen Street. The Forum has asked District Health Board staff interested in these issues to investigate what is in the emissions and undertake studies into the health of those living near the plant. This would include determining whether there are more symptoms of asthma and nasal or eye conditions than in other areas.

The Community Forum continues to meet monthly, looking into issues of importance to Richmond residents. It works closely with Tasman District Council and now chairs the Meet the Richmond Ward Councillors meetings that take place every two months.

The Forum has its own website www.livinginrichmond.co.nz and anyone interested in joining the group is most welcome. People can also contact the Forum by mail (PO Box 3521, Richmond) or email (chairperson@livinginrichmond.co.nz).

Best Island access

Residents on Best Island have always relied on the goodwill of the landowners to access to their properties.

But a recent acquisition of land by the Council means that the public road has now been extended, giving residents legal access as far as the first house closest to the bridge.

The island was first farmed 1880s by Phillip Best, which is how it gained its name. Phillip then divided it between his five sons.

Cottages were built on the southern end of the island in the 1950s, mainly as batches. In those days the law required only that access was by sea, but most people would drive over the mudflats at low tide.

A public access bridge was built in 1978 when the old wooden bridge, which belonged to the Golf Club, collapsed under the weight of a truck.

There are now nearly 40 properties on the island, with a population of about 100 permanent residents.

Don't give thieves a chance – police



Local police are warning locals to lock up. Reports of thefts from cars and houses are on the rise but minimal measures could help to kick the crime, according to Richmond's Senior Sergeant John Price.

“A great deal of the problem stems from people just not locking their vehicles and properties. Opportunist

thieves then have access to property and of course the results can be devastating.

“All people need to do is secure their houses when they leave and lock their cars even when they're parked in the driveway. It's just basic security.”

Pamphlets about the security measures people can take are available from the local police station.

Local Neighbourhood Support Groups can help to reduce crime in the area and police are encouraging people to join up. To find out if one already exists near you call Richmond Police, Ph 543 9500. If there isn't one already in place the police can assist with information about establishing one.

“Neighbourhood support groups are great because they're all about turning the clocks back and having people working together and caring about each other, watching out and being aware if something isn't right,” said Mr Price.

“The community really can reduce the opportunity for theft. We can do certain things here at the police but at the end of the day if people provide an opportunity, someone who might not usually be dishonest may be tempted to break the law.”

Richmond Ward Councillors



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ROADING UPDATE

Paton Road upgrade:

Council representatives and staff met at the end of May with the Paton Road Safety Action Group and agreed some interim measures to improve safety to the switchbacks on Paton Road.

These include improved signs and also traffic calming bumps known as rumble strips on the approach to the humps to increase road users' awareness of the dangers and remind them to take additional care.

This work should be completed by the end of June this year. A long-term plan is currently in the pipeline to reduce the height of the two humps and to widen the road. Council has advanced some funding to enable the designs to be finalised. This work should involve the hump nearest Richmond to be lowered by 2.5 metres, with the second hump reduced by 4 metres.

Intersection work on Gladstone Road

Plans are being drawn up to improve traffic flows at the intersections on Gladstone Road with Oxford Street and Queen Street, and the McGlashen Avenue intersection with the Deviation. The move has come in response to problems with congestion at peak times.

Designs for new traffic light systems are due to be completed by June. Funding of \$3.5million has been approved for this work. Consideration is being given in the plans for both pedestrians and other road users.

Councillor's Comment

The Local Government Commission recently completed its representation review for Tasman District Council. The review panel looked at councillor representative numbers across the district and made its decision based on population. As a result residents in the Richmond Ward will now have four Councillors to represent them, an increase of one. This increase recognises the rapid growth in Richmond.

Air quality: We are now approaching the cooler part of winter and it is important that everyone does their bit to keep Richmond's air clean. We should all be burning dry wood and where possible using clean air options to heat our homes.

Annual Plan: Councillors are very busy with the Annual Plan, listening to and reading the several hundred submissions that have been received. These make for a very full life, and good “bedtime reading”.

Local Body Elections: It won't be long until it's time again for you to decide who is to be your next Council. If there is anyone out there who thinks they would like to put their hat in the ring and stand for Council I can recommend it as a thoroughly rewarding job.

If you have any concerns don't forget your local Councillors are here to assist in any way we can, just give the Council a call and we will return your phone calls.

Cr Gordon Currie