

## Helensville town centre set to improve

Street trees, hanging baskets, seating, plantings, and better linkages with the Kaipara River are among the improvements planned to help revitalise the central Helensville shopping area.

Concept designs developed over the past year by landscape architect Geraldine Bayly and funded by Rodney Local Board were unveiled to around 60 locals at a 'drop-in' meeting in Helensville on Saturday, September 8.

The plans were drawn up in response to feedback received from local businesses, commercial property owners and the general public over the past couple of years on what could make Helensville a better place to live.

Geraldine says the over-riding sentiment among those providing feedback was the Kaipara River needs to be a focus and "water pulled back into the main street".

The concept plan calls for a meandering blue coloured concrete 'creek' running across Commercial Road and Creek Lane to the river, with a vertical sculpture to draw the eye towards the river. The wavy blue creek theme, and blue colour, would be used in other areas of the main street upgrade to unify the whole design.

The local board has around \$250,000 set aside to start on the first stage of the town centre improvements and is keen to get on with the project, says board deputy chair Phelan Pirrie.

Over the next three months Geraldine, in conjunction with 4Sight Consultants, will create detailed plans for the project, taking into account the further feedback received at the September meeting - one outcome of which was the desire for street tree plantings to be extended all the way from the showgrounds to Mill Road.

The planting of specimen trees is a

potential sticking point of the plan. Because Commercial Road is part of SH16, it comes under the auspices of the New Zealand Transport Authority whose rules don't allow for roadside trees with trunks greater than 150mm in diameter. But Geraldine hopes because of the low speed limit on Commercial Road an exception will be made.

stage is likely to be Creek Lane upgrades.

Subsequent stages will be completed as funds are available. Not all money is expected to come from the Rodney Local Board, with Geraldine saying they hope to tap into other funding sources such as Auckland Council's greenways and healthy waters funds.

Pointing out the concept plans are the result of years of consultation, she says: "It's heartening to see that people haven't really changed what they want from a few years ago, such as street trees, extra vegetation, and somewhere to sit and have a chat."

The September public consultation raised interesting issues, especially comments about the condition of some of the properties in the main shopping block - something the local board has no control over - with one person claiming the plans were just "putting lipstick on a pig".

Responding to that claim, Rodney Local Board deputy chair Phelan Pirrie says: "One of the reasons the local board is doing this [project] is we have to start somewhere. There are newer businesses moving into the area and buildings are gradually being done up. The thing that we can do from a board perspective is work on the public spaces. That's the area we have jurisdiction over."

"The public areas are something that we can do something about, and hopefully that will encourage new businesses to move into the area because the streetscape is attractive."

"I get the 'lipstick on a pig' thing, but if we don't put some lipstick on it, we've just got a pig!"

"So let's get the lipstick sorted out, and maybe the pig might start looking a bit more attractive, to use that analogy."



• Proposed Creek Lane changes (above) and the walkway to the carpark behind the War Memorial Hall



Other areas the consultation noted were the town's historic character, and Māori heritage - both of which Geraldine says will come to the fore as the plans are finalised.

Once the detailed plans are complete, they will undergo an NZTA audit, and if approved it is hoped the first contractors will be on site by the middle of next year. The first

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# editorial

Town centre improvements for Helensville - about damn time!

It's great to finally see some progress on making Helensville's main shopping street look better - the upgrades have been a long time coming. As so often seems to happen in New Zealand, things like this get talked about to death and either never happen, or take years to come to fruition.

Rodney Local Board (RLB) has set itself something of an impossible task, because it is never going to please everybody with the improvements it makes. That's partly because of misconceptions about what it can actually achieve - a point brought home at the recent public drop-in to discuss the concept plans. Members of the public wanted more pedestrian crossings - but that's NZTA's responsibility. They also wanted the shop fronts done up - but the onus for that is on the buildings' owners. The board can work with the public spaces - and that's pretty much it.

I had to laugh at the comment by one person that the proposed improvements would be merely 'putting lipstick on a pig' because of the dilapidated state of many of the buildings.

But I loved even more RLB deputy chair Phelan Pirrie's retort. Pointing out that cosmetic improvements to the town could help attract new businesses and the gentrification they can bring, he said: "If we don't put some lipstick on it, we've just got a pig! So let's get the lipstick sorted out, and maybe the pig might start looking a bit more attractive."

Here, here! We can talk about this forever ... let's just get stuck in and actually make some improvements. In 10 years' time when we have lovely maturing street trees, plantings and nice seating, no-one is going to say they were a mistake.

- Dave Addison, Editor

## New after-school care at Parakai

A new after school care programme at Parakai already had 23 children enrolled at the start of September after only a couple of weeks' operation.

Called sKids Parakai, it operates in the Parakai School hall from 3pm to 6pm, and is being run by experienced operators Daniel and Emma Torres (pictured at right).

The North Shore husband and wife have been sKids franchisees for four years. They are the area franchisees for Kumeu and the Waitoki/Silverdale areas, and operate five other sKids after school care centers.

sKids (Safe Kids in Daily Supervision) is the largest private out of school supervised care provider at schools in New Zealand, with more than 170 centres nationwide.

Parents can enrol their children and book them in for sessions online at: <https://skids.aimyplus.com>.

The new Parakai service will also offer school holiday programmes, with a diverse range of activities planned.

Daniel and Emma come from an information technology background. In 2014 they were looking for a business which they could involve their children in, while also

giving back to local communities.

"We chose the sKids franchise because its core values match up with our own. sKids mission of 'growing awesome Kiwi kids' resonates with us," says Emma.



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Other options available - see full menu in-store.

# From police to puppies

It's a career change about as different as you can get - local community police constable Mandi Bell has left the police force and is setting up in business as a dog walker.

Mandi had been with the police for 14 years - long enough to get a long service medal - when she left in late September.

She is now busy planning Tail-Blazers, her new 'dog adventure' business, which will be dog walking with a difference.

Rather than just taking dogs for walks on a leash around the suburbs, Mandi plans to bring groups of at least five dogs up to her rural 1.2ha home and let them stretch their legs around the property.

A keen trail runner (the business name is a play on her hobby) she also hopes to take the dogs running in Woodhill Forest and on Muriwai Beach.

Mandi is going to buy a van and have it converted with kennels in the back so she can collect dogs from their owners in the

Helensville, Kumeu and Riverhead areas and then take them up to her property for around two and a half hours of exercise.

She is starting a course on dog training this month, and expects to complete other courses in future. Mandi grew up around dogs, has previously had a Dalmatian, and currently owns six and a half year old Mirin, a "crazy" Hungarian Vizsla, a breed often referred to as 'velcro' dogs because of their loyalty and affection.

She hopes to have Tail-Blazers up and running (pun intended) by the end of the year, or sooner if possible. She plans to promote the business primarily through social media.

Despite the exciting new chapter in her life, Mandi will miss her role as local community constable, which she took on in July 2014.



• Mandi with Mirin

"Transferring to the community constable role from the frontline was refreshing," she says, "meeting and working with so many amazing people in our community. Helensville has a lot of people doing their bit.

"Responding constantly to 111 jobs can get quite stressful, and you easily forget there are good people, too, when you are dealing with seeing the worst sides of human nature. That can sometimes get you down."

A highlight of her time as Helensville's community constable was working with SKY Youth to plan and cook a Mexican feast for families at Ronald McDonald House.

"It was incredible to be a part of, and to see the youth that participated work hard together to get that meal on the table. What an honour," she says.

Other highlights included working alongside the close-knit team at Helensville police station "who all still have that common purpose", and travelling to Paris in 2016 to accompany an immigration deportee.

"Being a police officer has been a remarkable career," says Mandi. "It's full of every emotion possible, [but] also full of stress!"

"It's made me part of who I am today."

However there are sides to her police role Mandi says she is not going to miss, such as "being part of a system that I think is failing our people." She believes changes to our social system to prevent crime at grass-roots level is needed as the problems are "bigger than the police".

She also won't miss what she calls "contradictory expectations" - being expected to treat people with empathy, professionalism and integrity while not being treated with those same values.

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## Call for entries, help for Christmas parade

The Helensville Christmas parade on Saturday, December 8 will again finish with entertainment, yet to be announced, at Helensville Museum.

Tours of the museum will also be available.

The day's festivities will start at 9.30am with Santa on hand at the Kaipara Memorial RSA for photos, plus a bouncy castle, face painting, ice cream and entertainment in Creek Lane. The parade itself will begin at midday, travelling its usual route from Railway Street up Commercial Road and along Mill Road to the museum.

Locals or businesses wanting to enter a float in the parade can get an entry form by emailing: [helchrisfest@gmail.com](mailto:helchrisfest@gmail.com), phoning 021 488 427, or from Helensville Copy and Print.

A lot of volunteers are needed to make the day a success, with a variety of tasks available between 8am and 4pm. Anyone who can help should register their interest through the above contacts.

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## Raising a guide dog puppy

Raising a guide dog was something that had been in the back of Julie Croft's mind for many years, but she had to wait until she retired to take on the role.

Now the Helensville woman and her husband Rick are several months into being 'puppy raisers' for the Blind Foundation, and their beautiful Golden Retriever - Labrador cross Bea is a familiar site around town.

"I think it's really important that blind people get a chance to be independent and feel confident going out into the real world," says Julie.

Bea is the only guide dog being trained locally.

They took on looking after Bea when she was just 10 weeks old, and Julie says it was just like bringing in a two-year-old child.

"You have to have your house puppy-proof, and you'll be with it 24/7, even at night you are taking them out to toilet. It's rare that you are away from the puppy for the first couple of months."

Bea is now eight months old, and things are much easier.

"Now she's into her adolescence, so she's a teenage puppy - I like to say a puppy with an attitude," quips Julie.

"She knows quite a few things now and she's a lot of fun really."

There is no requirement for people to be experienced dog owners to take on being a Blind Foundation puppy raiser, and Julie very much considers themselves "newbies" when it comes to dog training.

"We're not puppy trainers, we're just ordinary amateurs, so we have a lot of questions." Fortunately the Blind Foundation provides puppy raisers with a large folder full of information, and regularly assesses the puppies throughout their time with their puppy raisers.

Julie and Rick have weekly get-togethers with a small group of other guide dog raisers at the Trust Stadium in Henderson. Many of those are experienced guide dog raisers, so provide a lot of advice and support.

Bea goes pretty much everywhere with the Crofts.

She's been to a movie and orchestra performance at the Civic, the Auckland Home Show, a Queen tribute concert at Orewa, a ride on the sailing ship Ted Ashby,

and has walked up and down Queen Street and ridden the train to Sylvia Park Mall - which Rick says she loved.

She's now at the stage where she is meant to go on public transport on a weekly basis.

"That's what the commitment is, it's not just sitting around the house with your dog, or just walking up and down Helensville," points our Julie. "We're planning trips just about every day. It gets us out and keeps us fit. It's great because we're doing a lot of walking."



• Julie and Rick Croft with guide dog 'puppy' Bea

A long-time new entrant teacher at Waitoki School, where she still volunteers two mornings a week, Julie says it's important people ask permission before approaching Bea when she's out in public.

If she's just out walking, locals are welcome to ask if they can say hello to Bea.

"But when she has her red coat on, that means she's in class. She's learning how to focus, she's learning manners, how to

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# Conflict zone practice held locally

International aid organisation ReliefAid held a conflict zone training course on a Parakai property late last month.

The New Zealand-based humanitarian organisation aims to save the lives of people affected by armed conflict and natural disasters. They are currently providing emergency shelter materials such as blankets, cooking sets and clothing to families forced from their homes by fighting in Syria.

ReliefAid has partnered with the University of Auckland to educate aid workers, who are completing a post-graduate Conflict Zone Humanitarian Practice course to develop specialist skills through practical based study, and learning the skills they will need to operate safely in active conflict zones.

The September 22 event in Parakai consisted of simulated field exercises to help the students develop a practical understanding of conflict zone humanitarian security management in a life-like setting.

Its aim was to give them a realistic experience of operating in a war zone, allowing them to learn potentially life-saving skills before being deployed into the real field.



• A homeless family in Syria carry a ReliefAid shelter package

The 12 Masters students took part in four simulations including checkpoint crossings, car-jackings, office robberies, and access negotiation. ReliefAid staff and advisors were involved in the exercise, providing students with the realistic scenarios.

The event was held at Tasman Horse Rides because ReliefAid executive director Mike Seawright was familiar with the property from previous visits there.

More information on ReliefAid's work is available at: [www.reliefaid.org.nz](http://www.reliefaid.org.nz). Donations can also be made through the website, with \$25 providing life saving shelter aid to a family of six.



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## 50 artists to show their stuff

Fifty artists spread over 20 venues should mean there's something for everyone at Arts in the Ville, to be held around Helensville over Labour Weekend.

This year's festival will feature a special mini-event on the Labour Day Monday. 'The Hat Walk' will be a 45-minute hat parade production and a chance for visitors to try out various hats and see how they look on other people, conducted by Marmalade Hats director Myra Lloyd. It will be held in the War Memorial Hall at 11am.

The central hub for information during

Arts in the Ville will be the hall meeting room.

Maps showing the locations of all the artists' studios, pop-up galleries and other venues will be distributed during the two weeks before Labour weekend, and will be available at local cafes and at all studios during the festival.

All information on the festival is also available online at: [www.artsintheville.co.nz](http://www.artsintheville.co.nz).

Sites involved in Arts in the Ville will be recognisable with fabric flags and fluorescent pink discs which will be outside each venue while they are open.

While most of the venues are within easy walking distance, a free shuttle bus will leave from outside the War Memorial Hall on the hour, from 11am until 3pm each day, with drop-offs at studios along the route (except Kaipara Coast Sculpture Garden).

Cafes and other food outlets in Commercial Road will be open throughout the weekend, and there will also be food available from local community groups around the War Memorial Hall.

Most exhibitors will be open all three days with a couple of exceptions - Jeff Thomson will only have his studio open on the Saturday, and both Arwen Flowers and the Whimsical Garden will be closed on the Monday.



• Helensville artist Leda Daniel works on her 'Ethereal Connections Series' - Photo: Flynn Daniel

## Raising a guide dog puppy cont...

• From page 4

respond appropriately to the environment that's around her."

She might be working on something specific, like avoiding a certain type of distraction such as a smelly rubbish bin, and a person coming up can add another distraction and upset the training.

"It's best to ask first, and please don't get your feelings hurt if I say 'not today' because

she's working on something," explains Julie.

The Crofts aren't sure how long they will get to keep Bea, but it's usually between 12 and 18 months. Then she will go on to six months of intensive training at the Blind Foundation, before a decision is made whether she has the 'right stuff' to become a guide dog.

More information on being involved with raising guide dog puppies is online at: <https://blindfoundation.org.nz/guide-dogs>.

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# Farewell to Glenyss Blackshaw

**Glenyss Blackshaw**  
30-6-1937 to 2-9-2018

Long-standing member and supporter of the Helensville & District Historical Society, Glenyss Blackshaw (right) passed away on Sunday, September 2 at the age of 81.

Glenyss, along with husband Brian, was involved in a wide range of businesses and organisations in the district.

Glenyss Hodson was born in Hawera on June 30, 1937.

Her parents Don and Agnes were share-milkers, so the family moved around the Taranaki and Waikato districts, and by the time they moved to Woodhill in 1952 Glenyss had attended eight schools.

For many years Glenyss worked in the Power Board office in Commercial Road.

She married Brian Blackshaw in 1968, and had two daughters, Rebecca (born 1973) and Briar (1977). Glenyss and Brian ran various businesses, mostly involved with forestry or garden and property maintenance, including a sawmill in Brady Road.

In 1967 they purchased a property at Te Pua where they established a large garden (later owned by Ian and Jan Amooore). From there, they moved in 1981 to the old Brady homestead on the corner of Brady Road, and greatly extended the garden and orchard and renovated the house. Their orchard included some prolific plum trees and they generously bartered or donated produce.

Brian ran a picture framing business, and Glenyss took over the Bernina sewing



machine agency in Helensville, running that shop for eight years and building it up to become the Helensville Wool and Handcraft shop. Glenyss also worked on Saturdays in Oikoumene's timber yard shop in Railway Street.

In her spare time she was involved in many community activities, including Girl Guides, the Berry Festivals, country and western music, the Acclimatisation Society, Christmas parades, Woodhill badminton, and various churches. She was a foundation member of the River Valley Baptist Church.

The Historical Society was one of her main interests, and she held office as treasurer and vice-president. She and Brian were active in the museum's garden and grounds maintenance.

Glenyss was proud of the three generations of her family, and was very involved in their lives. Sadly for their Helensville friends, failing health meant a move for the Blackshaws to Crestwood Retirement Village in West Auckland to be nearer their daughters and families, and more recently a move to Selwyn Village at Pt Chevalier.

- Wynne HaySmith

## Time theme for holidays at library

Helensville Library's theme for the October school holidays is 'Time Turner'. Each day, between 3pm and 4pm, there will be special time-related activities.

For the week beginning Monday, October 8, members of the Helensville Women's Institute will be teaching some classic crafts and skills. As well as those, there will be activity sheets for children to complete in the library or at home.

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## : From IT to Mechanics

Bernie Flynn, owner of both Helensville Mechanical Services and Helensville Motorcycle Services in Mill Road, isn't "especially a car nut".

In fact, he's not even a mechanic, but instead has a background in IT.

He'd been living in the Helensville area since 2003 and was looking for a lifestyle change and a local business opportunity. When the chance to purchase Parakai Motordrome came up, he grabbed it, and says managing mechanics wasn't a big step up from managing IT technicians.

In 2012 Bernie moved the business from Parkhurst Road in Parakai to its present site at 90 Mill Road, rebranding it to Helensville Mechanical Services at the same time.

When the motorcycle shop which was operating in the adjacent unit closed, Bernie took over that premises too, starting up Helensville Motorcycle Services to cater for the area's farmers and motorbike riders.

He now leases the entire building, having more recently expanded into the third unit to increase the capacity for the car side of the

business.

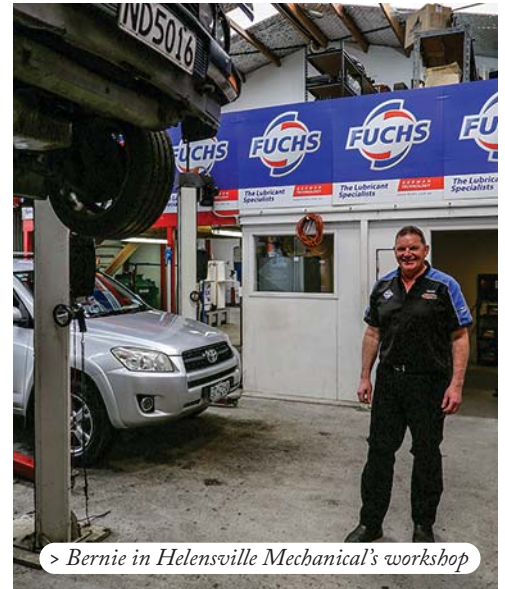
Helensville Mechanical Services now employs three mechanics - all of whom live locally - and differs from many other car service centres in that there are two vehicle hoists per mechanic.

Bernie says that's needed up here, because it can take a half day for parts to arrive for vehicles being repaired, and having the additional hoists means the mechanics can be working on two cars at the same time, avoiding potentially costly downtime.

Bernie's aim with the businesses is to make them as efficient as possible, modernising tools and processes and keeping costs down to enable him to give customers the lowest possible prices.

He puts his IT knowledge to good use, using the internet for research, which he says is vital these days with the huge range of different vehicles that come in for repairs and servicing.

Bernie says customer service is the other really important aspect of the business, having a dedicated front office person, keeping customers



> Bernie in Helensville Mechanical's workshop

updated with text alerts, and keeping a clean and tidy workshop.

"At the end of the day we are still a local business providing friendly, local service," says Bernie.

## : 100+ years for Kaukapakapa Store

If there's one thing that really sets Kaukapakapa Store apart, it's how long its been in business.

Michael Yin, who runs the store with his mum Tina and father Willie, says it's been operating for more than a century. The business was originally further up the road, but was moved to its present location in 1928. That



> Michael inside the Kaukapakapa Store

building burnt down around 1943 and was replaced with a 'temporary' building - the one that is still in use to this day.

Michael's parents took over running the store 11 years ago. Michael studied mechanical engineering at university, then worked in that field for four years before moving back to Kaukapakapa to work in the store five years ago.

Now he says he doesn't think he could ever move back to the city, citing the friendly local community spirit as something he would really miss.

"One of the good things about Kaukapakapa is that we all look after each other," he says.

Michael says the store has changed in the years his family has been there. When they took over it was more of a 'holiday' store, with much of the business from people passing through the town on their way up north. But now, with a rapidly growing local population, it has expanded into more of a general store to serve the locals' needs.

Plans for a potential supermarket in the new Kaukapakapa retail development along the road don't phase Michael, who believes many locals already do their bulk shopping in supermarkets near where they work, and will continue to support Kaukapakapa Store for their other needs - especially the ice creams the shop has been known for for years.

A popular recently added extra has been the introduction of Chinese takeaways on Friday nights, cooked by Michael's mum Tina. Originally from China, she cooks them herself the way they would have them in China - not as oily as those from most takeaways says Michael.

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## : Black Pete's returns to Parakai

When Parakai's Pete Williams stepped away from running his long standing Black Pete's Restaurant more than a decade ago, he never thought he would be back in the business.

But the popular Parakai bar and grill reopened in mid July with Pete at the helm, and he says it's been busy ever since.

"It's hard work, but quite a lot of fun seeing all the people I haven't seen in ages," says Pete.

"It's something the district needed too - a place to meet and eat without it costing an arm and a leg."

Pete originally opened the restaurant in the mid-1980s and ran it for 17 years. He then leased the business out for another nine years, before subsequently renting the premises for another restaurant business, which only lasted about 12 months.

"I didn't want the building empty," Pete says, explaining why he has reopened. He spent "the best part of \$30,000" setting the premises up again, buying new chairs and tables, a new coffee machine and kitchen equipment. The decor had

been updated by the previous tenant.

He's running the restaurant pretty much along the same lines as its previous iteration, providing "basic meals for a basic price" - a plan he says is proving popular with locals, some of whom have already returned several times since the reopening.

Main courses, such as steaks, fish of the day, ribs and marinated chicken breast, are all just \$23, while there's also a range of \$27 specials. As before, there is a children's menu too.

Black Pete's employs six staff - all locals - and is open from 4pm until around 9pm Thursdays to Mondays.

In addition the restaurant is also open for 'Roast Night' on Wednesdays, with meals available in either large (\$18) or small (\$15) portions. An even cheaper \$12 option is available for pensioners.



> Pete Williams inside Black Pete's

## : Mamas rule at The Kombuchery

If you made your way into The Kombuchery in Commercial Road last month, you would have seen the commemorative 'Suffrage 125' kombucha on the taps. The 'mamas' of Mama's Brew Shop created the brew to honour the women who fought for, and successfully gained,



> Naomi Phillips

suffrage in New Zealand 125 years ago.

Here's your chance to meet some of the women that make The Kombuchery happen.

Naomi Phillips is the latest mama to join the mamas. She has many years' experience in the hospitality industry, having worked previously at the Kaipara Tavern.

She brought that experience with her when she became the manager at The Kombuchery. As a mother of eight - the very definition of a 'mama' - she is very good at handling any type of situation and bringing the team in to line! Her favourite kombucha cocktail is The Lady Helen.

Jude Morris is the 'Queen of Coffee' at The Kombuchery. As head barista she's in charge of everything coffee-related, and bringing beautiful Eighthirty coffee to Helensville. Jude is always good for a chat as she's

making your morning cup of joe. Jude's favourite kombucha cocktail is The Helensville Villain, made with Scapegrace gin and Love kombucha.



> Jude Morris

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# Open day to celebrate preschool's 30th birthday

Helensville's Sunny Days Community Preschool will celebrate its 30th birthday with an open day at its historic Commercial Road premises on Saturday, October 13.

The day will include fun activities and a

bouncy castle for the children, a free prize draw, a photo board covering milestones in the centre's history, a sausage sizzle, and singing.

The open day runs from 10am to 1pm, and there will be birthday cake on offer.

The not-for-profit preschool operates from a 107-year-old timber former Union Bank of Australia building at 130 Commercial Road.

In 1956 the building was sold and became Helensville's original ANZ bank, before changing hands 30 years later in 1986 to a local teacher, Gabrielle Sinton, who ran a craft shop there for two years.

Then, in late 1988, it first opened as a child care facility, known then as Helensville Childcare Centre with Mrs Kay Smith as supervisor. Helensville Borough Council gave consent for 24 children to attend, with the building being rented from Mrs Sinton for \$100 per week.

The building was purchased in 1990 by the then newly-incorporated Helensville Community Childcare Inc.

After a decade of operation the childcare

facility closed in late 2000 because of financial difficulties, but was reborn 18 months later as Sunny Days Early Childhood Centre. The name changed again two years later to today's Sunny Days Community Preschool.

In the years since the building has been extended, and the playground extensively remodelled.

Sunny Days administrator Leesa Schultz says "several tonnes of playdough, sand, paint and pva have been used" since then.

Sunny Days became a registered charity in 2008, and continues to run as a not for profit community organisation to this day.

• To page 13



• Sunny Days children and staff

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**Sunny Days**  
Helensville Community Preschool Inc

**We're turning 30!**

**30-year Birthday Celebration and Open Day**

Join us to celebrate our birthday

**Saturday 13th October, 10am to 1pm**

Join us for some birthday cake

- Children's fun activities
- Bouncy castle
- Photo boards
- Free prize draw
- Sausage sizzle
- Singing

If you are a past pupil or teacher that was part of the history of Helensville Sunny Days Preschool, please drop in and see us. All welcome.

**130 Commercial Road, Helensville**

# Auction to help celebrate 25 years at Women's Centre

Back in 1993 Leigh Cummings stood outside the hospital on Commercial Road chatting with a friend about a new pet project, a drop-in centre for local women, and wondered where they could put it.

She saw the Post Office across the road and thought, "I wonder what's upstairs? That'd be a great space for us."

And that's what it turned out to be. The empty postmaster's flat was taken over and opened as the first home of the Helensville Women's Resource Centre, now called the Helensville Women and Family Centre (HWFC).

The idea for the centre came after Leigh started work as a community worker for Barnados, which had set up a family support office in Helensville.

Leigh and fellow community worker Michelle Smith were becoming increasingly aware of the growing number of trips they were taking to access the services of the West Auckland Women's Centre.

"We needed to find a way to bring these services here to Helensville, and we wanted a safe space where women could come for anything from a room to change their baby's nappy or for help with family violence."

For the first year or so the centre ran as a collective thanks to the drive of a few determined volunteers and the support of the West Auckland Women's Centre.

"We operated as a collective under their umbrella for the first year or so, then we formed a Charitable Trust and secured funding for the provision of HWFC services," says Leigh.

One of the people to come to the centre

for friendship and support back then was Christine Salmon. She'd recently moved back to Parakai from Australia and after the death of her husband was raising five children alone.

She laughs when she recalls her first visit: "I arrived and dragged the kids upstairs and announced I was here for the Christmas function, only to find out the lunch was happening elsewhere. I burst into tears, because I was just so tired, but the women were so helpful and soon after I became a volunteer myself."

She's now the manager and her daughter Michaela has also worked at the centre. In fact, it really is a family affair. While Leigh doesn't work there any more, her daughter Jeanette is the Family Support and Youth Worker.

Over the years the centre has moved a number of times, but earlier last year it returned to the old Post Office building which both Leigh and Christine agree "felt like coming home."

Over 25 years the centre has hosted a variety of courses and programmes - from helping women get

back into work after raising a family, to fitness classes and programmes like Pathfinders, which helps children who have been through a traumatic experience such as the death of a loved one or witnessing family violence.

One of the biggest events on the Helensville Women and Family Centre calendar these days is Children's Day Out, held now for 10 years. It's a day of free activities and games for children and whānau.

• To page 13



• From left: Christine, Jeanette and Leigh



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Introducing Amber Marchant to the Barfoot and Thompson Kumeu office, as Kevin Oldfield retired at the end of September. We wish Kevin well for his future endeavors and safe travels.

Amber has worked for Barfoot and Thompson since 2013 as a Portfolio Manager, and comes to our branch with a wealth of experience. Amber is driven and professional and we are excited to have her on board.

Please contact Amber for rental appraisal, and she is more than happy to discuss your Property Management requirements.



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## from the frontline

As I write this I am somewhat nostalgic. This is my last 'from the frontline' column, and September 20th will be my last day as a police officer.



After 14 years in the New Zealand Police it is time for a change of direction. So firstly, I want to say thank you to everyone who has read this column over the years. I always tried to make it relevant to what was happening in our community, and I hope I achieved that with something new and interesting to read. I wouldn't be able to count the times where I was told by readers that they enjoyed reading it. I was always quite chuffed at that. I am also lucky I have had Dave to edit my grammar, I was only ever mediocre at English!

Secondly, I must reiterate that having a safe and crime free community is not just a police responsibility. It is the responsibility of the whole community, working together, communicating, and being aware. If a community does these things well I genuinely believe crime statistics can fall. We are never going to eradicate it, but we can minimise the possibility of it and the chances that we become victims of it.

And lastly, I want to let everyone know that I was proud to be a police officer, that I worked hard and I absolutely loved my job as the Helensville Community Constable.

For some reason I had an instant affinity with this great little community and wanted to do my bit to make it a safer and better place to live. But it is time to turn my hand to a new occupation, a new adventure where I can acquire new skills and focus on grasping a few more of life's opportunities (see article page 3).

So take care everyone, look after your neighbours, lock your homes and sheds, report crime and suspicious behaviour and last one, I promise ... drive safely and to the conditions.

It has been a pleasure.

- Mandi Bell, Community Constable

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## 25 years at HWFC cont...

• From page 11

For new residents who don't know much about the centre, Christine says: "You're always welcome, we're here to offer friendship and support so please drop in, and if you have anything to offer we'd love to hear from you."

Christine says the centre has become a part of the fabric of the community over the last quarter of a century.

"We've been through some tough times but we've held it together and the fact we're still here is our biggest success."

All former and current friends of the centre are invited to join in the 25 year celebrations on Friday, October 19, when the centre hosts the Art for A Cause fundraising auction as part of Arts in the Ville. Tickets to the event are \$20 and are available by emailing: [info@hwfc.co.nz](mailto:info@hwfc.co.nz).

## Preschool's 30th cont...

• From page 10

It's Ministry of Education license has grown to allow 34 children on site, and Sunny Days is currently running at capacity, with 28 over two-year-olds and six under-tuos, and 10 full and part-time staff.

A \$100,000 extension and redevelopment of the playground, requiring major earthworks, began in 2010, and just this year \$42,000 worth of safety matting and drainage was installed in the outdoor area.

Other work done in recent years includes a new macrocarpa fence and entranceway, repainting, and installation of heatpumps and upgrading windows with safety glass.

"We are constantly looking at long-term plans and having ideas to create better working space and to make our learning environment challenging and fun for the children," says Leesa.

"We offer reduced fees as we are not-for profit, and don't have big overhead expenses. Supporting our families in the community is always our focus and priority."



## Helensville Birthing Centre

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Helensville Birthing Centre is your local community facility. It provides a free service for women who choose to give birth in a low-tech environment. Alternatively, women who give birth in hospital can then transfer to us for the opportunity to rest and establish breastfeeding.

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### Call for new trustees

The Helensville District Health Trust is seeking interest from people passionate about the health of our community to join our not-for-profit board as an Appointed Trustee.

We are looking for people with broad professional experience, particularly in the following areas:

- Property Development
- Facilities Management
- HR
- Legal
- Health and Safety.

This voluntary role involves a commitment of at least one three-hour meeting a month, plus the required pre-reading of Board documents.

The Board is also looking for a new Chairperson following the retirement of Erica McKenzie.

Board meetings are generally held on the third Thursday of the month, 6:30pm-9:00pm at Te Whare Oranga o Parakai.

Health Trust Business Manager Nicola Keen-Biggelaar says it's an exciting time to join the Health Trust as it's about to embark on a major redevelopment of its Health Campus on the corner of Commercial Road and Porter Crescent.

"This is an ambitious project that'll need innovation and prudence, so the community will be relying on the Board to harness the pioneering spirit that the Trust was first built on, as well as ensuring our sustainability for now and into the future."

To register your interest and receive a full Trustees Pack please contact HDHT Business Manager Nicola Keen-Biggelaar via email: [manager@hdht.co.nz](mailto:manager@hdht.co.nz) or phone: 09 420 7561.

### First aid course

Could you help Kermit? You would if you learnt basic first aid and now is your chance, with a one-day, eight-hour First Aid Level 1 Course at Te Whare Oranga o Parakai on Friday 12 October.

A St John First Aid Tutor will facilitate the course for a maximum of 20 people. To enquire about places and cost, email Amy Wood on [events@hdht.co.nz](mailto:events@hdht.co.nz).



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## Kōrero Corner at library

Helensville Library - Te Pātaka Kōrero o Awaroa - has set up a Kōrero Corner to provide locals of any ability with a safe and comfortable space to learn, practice, and share their knowledge of te reo Māori.

The move was inspired by a challenge set by customers across the Auckland Libraries system.

The library has also moved its Kohinga Māori Collection from two crammed bays of shelves behind the public computers, to an expanded four bay area at the end of the adult non-fiction section, adjacent to the new Kōrero Corner.

The move has meant a little juggling of some other sections, so if you can't find something just ask the staff.

## Machine on show for Heritage Festival

An exhibit about Wandering Kate, the huge Deering Bay City Shovel recently acquired by Helensville Museum, will feature as part of the Auckland Heritage Festival.

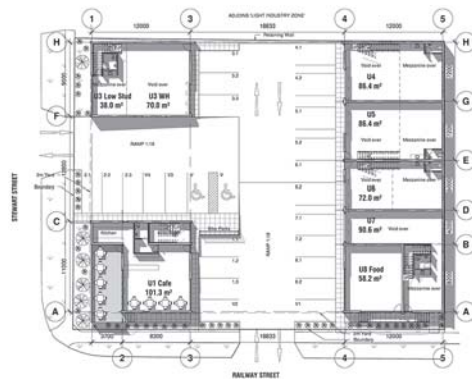
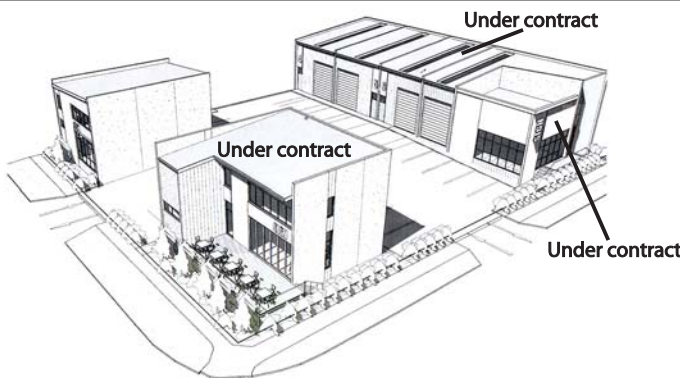
As well as being able to view the massive piece of earth moving equipment, there will be a series of photo display boards about the machine.

The Heritage Festival runs until Sunday, October 14, and the exhibit will be on show during normal museum hours, 9am to 12pm Monday to Friday, and 1pm to 3.30pm Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. Normal entry fees apply, and all funds raised will go towards a new barn for the machine.

Wandering Kate is currently on display in Hec's Barn at the museum, but is taking up so much space the museum maintenance team has had to move its workshop to a smaller shed. Fundraising for a new barn, so Wandering Kate can have her own permanent home shared by other machinery, is underway.

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# local board matters

## ■ Helensville main street improvements

There was a great turnout for the drop-in session a few weeks ago on the draft plans for Helensville's main street improvements. We received a lot of feedback and some interesting ideas that the designers will be considering as they prepare detailed designs.

The Local Board has allocated funding for this project this financial year to start the first stage in the centre of Helensville, so we're keen to see things happening on the ground. There's been a lot of talk for years on improvements and nothing much has happened - I suspect people will believe it when it starts!

The project for the whole of Helensville will take a while to complete, however the designs being prepared will enable the Board to quickly allocate money in the future to each stage. You can keep an eye on the project on Facebook, search for the; 'Helensville Main Street Improvements' page.

At the session there were a few local maintenance issues raised in regard to public spaces, walkways and lighting. I recommend people log these issues with Auckland Council as soon as they see them.

## Photo competition

The Helensville A&P Show's final Winter Series competition - photography - will be held on Sunday, October 28.

The competition has three classes for adults - Action, Workmates, and Animals - and a single class for children, Me and My Pet Selfie. Photos can be colour or black and white, framed or unframed, and any size.

Entries, which cost \$3 each, should be dropped at the showgrounds between 9am and 10am on the day. Judging will start shortly after, and images will be able to be collected before midday.

Prizes are \$15 for first, \$10 for second, and \$5 for third in each class.

It may also be possible to enter photographs digitally - details were still being finalised as we went to print, but visit [www.helensvilleshow.co.nz](http://www.helensvilleshow.co.nz) to see if that option is available.

You can phone 09 301 0101, or better yet, log in online - Google 'Auckland Council Report a Problem' to find the relevant page. If you get no action on the issue after a couple of weeks, let me know using the contact details below.



## ■ Improvements to rural road safety on the way.

In this year's 10 Year Plan Auckland Council allocated \$120 million specifically to rural road safety projects. This aligns with the government's focus on improving road safety.

Auckland Transport has adopted 'Vision Zero', also known as the Safe System. This is an international road safety movement started in Sweden more than 20 years ago to eliminate all road deaths. Back then, Sweden had a similar fatality rate to New Zealand today. They adopted ambitious targets and invested heavily in safety infrastructure and lower speed limits, which resulted in almost halving road deaths by 2016. If New Zealand had the same rate of road deaths per head as Sweden today, 255 lives would not have been lost last year.

Rodney has one of the worst death and injury rates in Auckland, and this new budget is welcome. Too many people are dying and suffering live-changing injuries on our roads, and something needs to change as the accidents have increased.

Work has already started in some areas such as the Dairy Flat highway and will include improving road design, reviewing speed limits, and other measures.

You can play your part in making our roads safer by being patient, driving to the conditions on our unforgiving roads, and reporting bad driving by calling \*555 or 111.

If you have anything related to Council you need assistance with, or have a local project you want to get going, contact me on either phone 021 837 167 or email; [phelan.pirrie@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:phelan.pirrie@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).

- Phelan Pirrie

Deputy Chair, Rodney Local Board



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## community tidbits from town and around

### ■ WAITOKI MARKET

At the Waitoki market on Saturday, October 13, Michele and Debbie will be demonstrating how essential oils can enrich the atmosphere within your home and support natural health.

There will be a selection of baked goods, plants, homemade and used bargains, bric a brac, preserves, and other items on sale in the Waitoki Hall, Kahikatea Flat Rd from 8.30am to midday.

Proceeds from the market go back to our local community. New stall holders enquiries to Gill, phone 420 3301 or email: waitokihall@gmail.com.

### ■ MUSEUM AT LARGE

On Sunday, October 21 Kaukapakapa Library will hosts a fundraiser for the Helensville Museum.

Visitors will be able to learn about the museum and books available for purchase will include 'Pioneering Women of the South Kaipara', 'Men Came Voyaging', 'Tall Spars, Steamers and Gum', and for train enthusiasts 'The Kaipara Line'. Also, the museum's just released 2019 'Then and Now' calendar will be on sale.

The library will be open from 10am to 1pm in conjunction with the Kaukapakapa Village market. Contact Megan Paterson, phone 021 959 017 or email: threehorses@xtra.co.nz for more information.

### ■ KAUKAPAKAPA MARKET

The next Kaukapakapa market is on Sunday, October 21 from 8.30am to 1pm.

## trade & classifieds

### ■ Helensville Glass

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Live music this month will be from duo Mike and Gillian, and there will be free face painting and a children's craft table. Stalls will include locally grown produce, artisan food, handmade crafts, secondhand goods and collectibles.

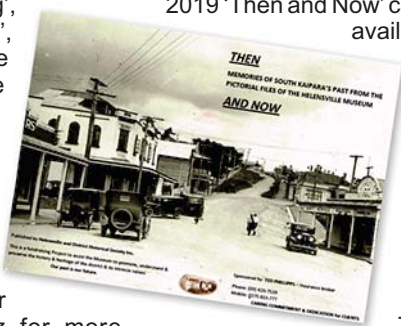
For more information or to book a stall phone Sarah on 0274 831 542 or email: sarah1@maxnet.co.nz.

### ■ SHINE IN D'VILLE

Kaipara Classic Car Club will holds its popular annual car and motorbike show at the Helensville Museum on Sunday, November 25 from 10am. Entry is \$5 per car

## 'Then & Now' local calendar

Historic photos of the South Kaipara district with their modern equivalents taken from the same locations this year feature in a 2019 'Then and Now' calendar which is now available.



A fundraiser for the Helensville and District Historical Society, the calendars cost \$15 and have been sponsored by local insurance broker Ted Phillipps.

They will be available from the society's stall at Kaukapakapa library on Sunday, October 21, or see Lynn in the Helensville Museum office.

The museum's library stall will also be selling some of the society's books, as well as kauri trays made by Alan Scott, who has worked on the museum's Helensville Courthouse building for many years. The trays are made from rescued timber, and come with a small history and courthouse image branded into the bottom.

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**Letters to the Editor:** Should be kept to around 250 words and may be edited as space dictates.



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