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Community garden to aid food security

Helensville has a new community garden.

Focused on growing food to give back to the community, it's on the small block of land in Commercial Road beside Sunny Days Early Learning Centre.

It's a community-run initiative supported by the South Kaipara Food Plan, which operates under the umbrella of South Kaipara Good Food, which also oversees the Kai Collective.

The garden is a pilot plot for future plans to upscale the model in order to feed local people and create a 'closed loop' food system.

The garden was inspired by Kai Collective volunteer AJ Nash, who thought the unused north-facing plot of land would be an ideal spot for a community garden.

She approached the Sunny Days team, who were happy for the land to be used for the garden.

AJ got talking with other Kai Collective volunteers and Jess Charnley, the recently appointed South Kaipara Food Plan 'Activator', and soon formed a core group of dedicated locals who set to work creating the garden.

"It was a very organic process. We already shared a vision and dream of growing food for our community and using under-utilised space to do so. The Food Plan is here to support and partner with community-led initiatives in the food space," explains Jess.

Finding untreated timber for the beds was a challenge, but they salvaged the remains of the old Kumeu badminton rooms that were due to be burned. They teamed up with local builder Liam Browne from LB Builders, who helped them select, de-nail, and cut the timber to size.

At an open community workshop, Liam guided and helped community members to

build the garden beds.

"The core group has now grown and there has been great buy-in from the community," says Jess.

"We have many individuals and families that bring with them a range of skills and ideas, and who want to be part of something in order to give back to our community. We have support from the Kaipara College horticulture department who are keen to be involved and will be growing seedlings for us, along with Paremoremo Prison.

"Everyone is welcome and you don't need any prior gardening experience to get involved; this space is as much about community connection and relationships as it is about growing kai."

The gardens will be planted with seasonal produce and herbs, along with some fruit trees as well.

"We actively encourage buy-in from the community and have left space to grow the garden," says Jess. "We want it to be representative and hold space for everyone in our community, and are starting small to allow space for others to come in and grow food that is meaningful to them - for example community members may want to grow and share produce that represents their culture, or culturally traditional herbs, medicine etc."

The produce from the garden is for the community's use. Jess says they would like to have a produce stand people are free to take from, and include picking instructions for produce like herbs and

leafy greens.

"If people don't have access to land to grow food but want to, they are welcome to grow some food there to take home too," she adds.

Jess says the garden will operate on a trust model, and hopes that produce is only taken when it is ready to harvest.

"However if people are hungry and need kai, that's what it is there for and some things grown will be best if people pick directly.

"There isn't much we can do but trust and hope that community members will see the value in this and respect the fact we are volunteers growing food for others - which includes them."

She adds Sunny Days staff and caregivers will be welcome to use any of the produce to feed the children.

Jess says the garden is envisioned as a place of social connection and learning, and free community workshops are planned covering things like composting, crop rotation, and soil health.

"It is a space by the community for the

• To page 5



• Volunteers helping build the gardens - Photo: Pink Lady Photography

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editorial

It's a paradox that at the time everyone is getting pretty impatient with Covid-19, we need to be more patient than ever.

Everyone needs to take a breath and accept there could be delays seeing your doctor or waiting for prescriptions. Shops may not have everything you want available all the time - that's noticeable by the empty spaces on the shelves of supermarkets and other retailers. If you're doing a building project, you may find materials in short supply. And if you are waiting on items from overseas ... just wait, and wait.

The fault doesn't sit with any of the service providers or retailers, nor with the government (despite some people's vocal opinions). You just have to look around the world and see that everywhere is the same. Work forces around the globe have been hugely impacted by Omicron, causing rising prices and delays in virtually every service and product.

Every day, for months, the national media has run items about MIQ problems, health workers being overworked, vaccine issues ... the list goes on. The inference in most cases is that those things are the government's fault. That seems to be the default role of journalism, to try to catch the government out in a mistake or scandal (and I mean any government, not specifically our current one).

When you or I change our minds about something, it's usually because we have considered the options and decided change is warranted. If a government does the same, it's labeled a 'flip flop' because that sounds bad, like they are indecisive.

That type of reporting is one reason I got out of daily journalism. I still clearly recall being told by the chief sub-editor on the Auckland Star, many years ago, to rewrite an article from a more negative angle. Basically, bad news sells.

These problems the media bang on about aren't unique to New Zealand, so bear that in mind next time the TV news tells you about something dreadful happening here. Compared to a lot of other countries, we've had it pretty good so far - and for the most part still do.

So everyone, please be patient.

- Dave Addison, Editor

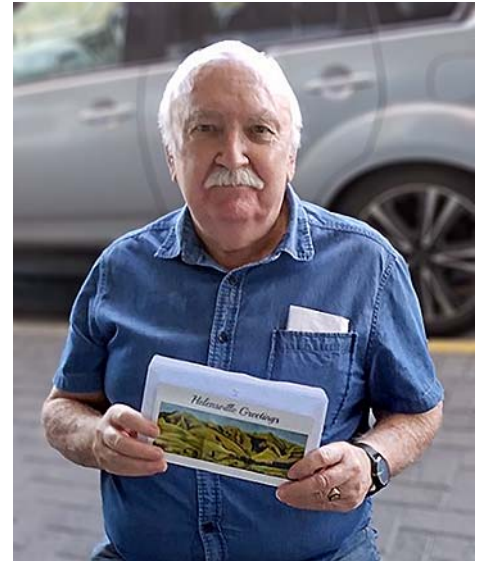
Community stalwart departs

Tribute was paid to the outstanding contribution made by Mike O'Neill over many years to the Helensville and Parakai communities through resident and ratepayers organisations at the AGM of Te Awaroa Residents & Ratepayers Association on February 24.

Mike (right) was presented with some Helensville-themed items by local artist Bernette Malizia.

He and wife Pauline are moving to retirement accommodation in Matamata at the end of March. Their time at their Parakai home is the longest they have lived in one place, with Mike's British military service seeing them based at numerous locations around the world.

"Infusing conversation with military anecdotes is Mike's trademark quirk, and his absence will be noticed," says TARRA chair Holly Southernwood.



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Jana Mills



Waitoki teen wins MX title

Waitoki motocross rider Cole Davies won the senior MX125 class at the recent Waikato Motocross Championships - at the age of just 14.

The newest - and youngest - member of the Altherm JCR Yamaha motocross team made a stunning debut at the championships, held on Saturday, February 19 at a track just outside Te Kuiti.

Cole finished 8th, 6th and 5th in three races with fields of around 30 riders, including those on more powerful bikes.

He won the MX125 class 11 points clear of second-placed Jared Hannon, competing against 15 other racers.

Hosted by the North King Country Motorcycle Club, the championship had previously been postponed twice due to Covid-19.

Cole's team manager Josh Coppins was very impressed with his results.

"Although this is Cole's first race meeting for the team, he has been riding for us for about eight months. This is his first actual event because he's been locked down in Auckland for ages.

"It's a pretty impressive achievement to be that young and win the senior 125 class. He was on the newly-developed 2022 YZ125 model and this great result suggests that Cole has a very exciting future ahead with us," says Josh.

Cole has been racing since the age of 4, amassing a string of successes. He won national titles in every age group in the 65cc mini motocross category. Last year he won the national junior 85cc class title and came second in the junior 125cc class, as well as winning the Interschool Motocross Challenge at Rotorua.

His successes haven't come without

mishap however - in his 10 years of racing he has broken both legs, both wrists and a shoulder.

Cole has just left Orewa College to be home schooled to allow more flexibility for his motocross training, with the eventual aim to become a professional rider in the AMA Supercross series in the United States.



• Cole Davies on his way to winning the Senior MX125 title

Library Omicron status

As the Omicron outbreak spreads, senior librarian Anne Coppell says it could affect local library and council services at short notice.

"We have had to go to a 'click and collect' service for an afternoon recently - but this could happen more frequently. We could also close at short notice," she says.

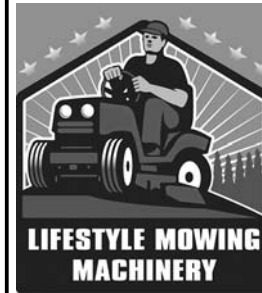
Any service changes will be posted on the library's Facebook page.

Vaccination passes and masks are required to enter the Helensville War Memorial Hall building, which includes the library, the service centre desk, and the hall.

You can email library staff at: helenlib@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz, or phone 0800 695 427 and ask to be redirected to Helensville Library.

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It's just too two tutu much!

February featured a rare 'palindrome' day, where the date is the same read forwards or backwards - 22-02-2022. There will only be 12 similar palindrome dates in the whole 21st century.

As the date fell on a Tuesday, the media dubbed the day 'Twos-day' - and to celebrate the abundance of twos, some of Helensville Library's staff decided to dress up in - you guessed it - tutus.

"It was a bit of shock to the stormwater team we met that day, while (metaphorically) wearing our Council Services hats," jokes senior librarian Anne Coppell.

She says the library team was pleased to



• L to R: Library and Service Centre assistants Mark, Rachel, Anne (Senior Librarian, Children & Youth), Linda, and Irene all tutu-ed up for palindrome day 22-02-2022

support the Helensville A&P Show's online-only show, with decorated cardboard cut-out piggies brightening the exterior of the building.

February also marked the end of the Auckland Libraries' Te Ara Poutama Level Up summer reading challenge for children and teens, which a "small number of enthusiastic readers" took part in. Each library had a prize draw, drawn by one of Auckland Libraries' Reading Engagement Specialists.

"We would have been happy with whoever won this - but it was lovely to give the prize to a summer reading regular," says Anne. Eliza Gilbert and her family have taken part in the programme each year.



• Anne presents Eliza (centre) with her prize. With her are siblings Sasha and Andrew

Kaukapakapa cemetery plots available

Plots on the 'Ashes Berm' at the All Saints cemetery at Kaukapakapa are now available. Plots cost \$400 and enquiries should be made to Grev and Maureen Walker, ph 09 420 7173.

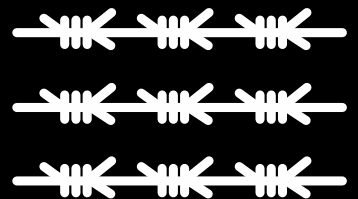
The Ashes Berm is the latest area of the cemetery to come under restoration, thanks to new committee member Jo Jordan.

The original pencil conifers planted by the late Isla Willis along the SH16 boundary had succumbed to pests, but Kaipara Coast Garden Centre has donated replacement Northern White Cedars, as well as climbers to grow along the fence line. These are a hardier species and are already enhancing the well-tended look of the cemetery.



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Art trail exhibition

Since December 2020 locals have been able to view the works of a group of 12 Helensville artists in their studios on the Helensville Art Trail, held on the third Sunday of each month.

Now, those artists have come together for an exhibition at the Helensville Art Centre, on until Sunday, March 27. Gallery hours have been extended specially for this exhibition, including Sundays from 10am to 2pm.

The collaborative exhibition brings together diverse artistic practices to allow the public to view the studios as one body.

The range of art on show is broad, covering the gamut from lost wax casting of bronze and crystal glass, painting and corrugated sculptures, through to intricate turned woodwork, elegant hats, and jewellery.

The artists taking part are: sculptors Joanne Sullivan, Jeff Thomson, and Jacky Pieper; wood turner Ray Scott; textile artist Fiona McBride; printmaker and painter Ruth Sumner; painters William Robert Boyd, Michael Rowland, and Raywin Cruickshank; hat maker Myra Lloyd; mixed media artist Leda Daniel; and gemstone carver Julie Nash.

The Art Centre's first member's show of the year will be 'The Portrait', to be held in April. A tribute to the long-standing tradition of portraiture in art, along with the usual head



• Gemstone carver Julie Nash will be taking part

and shoulders painting portraiture can take many forms, so expect other interpretations such as abstract works and sculptures.

Finally, for the rest of the year the Art Centre's workshop will feature a quaint exhibition of postcards.

"Revisiting past times of sending postcards as a personal form of communication is symbolised in this event," says centre manager Yvonne Abercrombie.

Member artists can enter works at any time to keep enriching the space, and all works are priced under \$100.

Community garden for food security (cont)

• From page 1

community, and we aspire to put on a free community meal with produce grown with the support of The South Kaipara Food Plan. This is a drop in the bucket of what can be done to improve food resilience in our area, and we plan to expand on this so everyone in the South Kaipara region has access to food."

Locals wanting to know more about the project or to be involved with the gardens can join the Facebook group 'Friends of Te

Awaroa Community Gardens' or email Jess at: jessica@skgf.org.nz.

Jess is also keen to hear from anyone interested in helping bring the South Kaipara Food Plan to life in another way. The food secure plan can be viewed at www.skgf.org.nz.

The team thanks Wyatt Landscape Supplies who are donating soil to fill the beds, Narbey Farms for woodchip and manure, and LB Builders for donating time, tools and nails. They are now on the lookout for a 10,000 litre water tank.

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And the winners are...

Despite the physical Helensville Show being cancelled this year because of Covid-19, the special 'virtual' Show competitions attracted good numbers of entries.

Here are the results from classes which had been judged by the time of going to print:

■ Carrfields Kids Video

Class 2: Pet Frolics: First - Piper Stubbs; Second - Abbie Burke; Third - Boston Stubbs.

Class 3: Pet Obedience: First - Dylan Burke; Second - Ayla Minton; Third - Abbie Burke & Jesse Minton; H/C Piper Stubbs & Boston Stubbs.

Class 4: Dress-up Pet/Owner First - Abbie Burke; Second - Dylan Burke.

■ Farmlands Adults/Kids Video

Class 6: Best pony or horse trick: First - Elaine Davies; Second - Mya White; Third - Ashley Taylor.

Class 7: An unlikely matching pair, eg. a similar looking cat and calf: First - Deb Owen; Second - Archie Taylor; Third - Piper Stubbs.

Class 8: Mini musterer (any animal): First - Ethan Kelly.

■ Physio Flex Guess the Weight

Class 9: Bull: David Owen (829.5kg).

Class 10: Jar of Pumpkin seeds: Shona Addison (478 seeds).

Class 11: Marrow: Anika Mason (1.029kg).

■ PGG Wrightsons Children's Video

Class 12: Waggiest tale (any pet): First - Piper Stubbs; Second - Boston Stubbs.

Class 13: Best trick by your pet: First - Boston Stubbs; Second - Piper Stubbs.

Class 14:

Animal buddies:
First - Maddie Logan; Second - Harley Logan; Third - Boston Stubbs; H/C - Piper Stubbs.

■ Burmester Realty Floral Art & Cut Flowers

Class 20:

Harry Potter themed floral arrangement: First - Rebecca Englefield; Second - Shona Addison; Third -



• Class 40 - Māori Craft Item, 1st Leigh Bosch

Shona Addison.

Class 21: Floral arrangement in an unusual container: First - Jan Backhurst; Second - Lois Mayor; Third - Shona Addison.

Class 23:

Specimen Rose in bloom: First - Anna

Shaver; Second - Geraldine Bradly; Third - Shona Addison.

Class 24: Any Small Dahlia: First - Deb Owen; Second - Deb Owen; Third - Sophie Holst.

Class 25: Any Large Dahlia: First - Sophie Holst; Second - Deb Owen; Third - Lyn Catchpole.

Class 26: Anne Holst's Melting Moment: First - Deb Owen; Second - Shelley Ross; Third - Cathryn Loveday.

Class 27: Celebration Decorated Cake: First - Fran Opazo; Second - Anna Shaver; Third - Anna Shaver; H/C - Deb Owen.

Class 28: Rural Women Favourites Class: First - Anna Shaver; Second - Shona Addison.

Class 29: Arrangement of herbs, min four varieties: First - Piper Stubbs; Second - Boston Stubbs.

Class 30: Potatoes, any 3: First - Geraldine Bradly; Second - Catherine Loveday.

Class 31: Vegetable collection, four varieties: First - Harvey Shaver; Second - Cassidy Shaver.

Class 32: Hen Eggs 3: First - Olivia

• Class 27 - Decorated Cake, 1st Fran Opazo

• Class 40 - Māori Craft Item, 1st Leigh Bosch

• To page 7



• Class 27 - Decorated Cake, 1st Fran Opazo

■ Raines Homewares Baking

Class 26: Anne Holst's Melting Moment: First - Deb Owen; Second - Shelley Ross; Third - Cathryn Loveday.

Class 27: Celebration Decorated Cake: First - Fran Opazo; Second - Anna Shaver; Third - Anna Shaver; H/C - Deb Owen.

Class 28: Rural Women Favourites Class: First - Anna Shaver; Second - Shona Addison.

■ Jas Sergeant, Ray White Garden Produce

Class 29: Arrangement of herbs, min four varieties: First - Piper Stubbs; Second - Boston Stubbs.

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Class 32: Hen Eggs 3: First - Olivia

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• From page 6

Kelly; Second - Geraldine Brady.

Class 33: Apples 3: First - Linda Hall.

Class 34: Lemons 3: First - Shona Addison.

Class 35: Tomatoes 3: First - Deb Owen; Second - Julie Croft; Third - Alison Davis.

■ **FIGG Art & Craft**

Class 40: Māori Craft item: First - Leigh Bosch; Second - Piper Stubbs; Third - Piper Stubbs.

Class 41: Any item, hand-knitted or crochet: First - Julie Croft; Second - Anne Coppell; Third - Pat Kench; H/C - Noeline Coppell.

Class 42: Any item, patchwork, embroidered or sewn: First (pictured below) - Stephanie Ross; Second - Talia Crawley; Third - Shelley Ross.

Class 43: Any item, paper, macrame, beading, wood or metal work: First - Phillip Beer; Second - Shelley Ross; Third - Talia Crawley; H/C - Talia Crawley.



Class 44:

Painting or drawing, 2 dimensional, any theme & media:

First - Pauline Denton;

Second -

Lyn

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Caren

a West;

H/C - Olivia Kelly.

Class 45: Painting or drawing, 3 dimensional: First -

Jock Steedman; Second -

Boston Stubbs; Third - Jock Steedman.

Class 46: Original Painting, child 12 or under:

First - Piper Stubbs; Second - George Steedman;

Third - George Steedman.

Class 47: Original Painting, child 13 - 18: First -

Angela Pivac.

Class 48: Original Painting, differently-abled adult: First - Thomas Hogan; Second - Agnes Ward; Third - Sandy Sturges; H/C - Ian Sangster.

■ **Vets North Animal Photography - Adults & Children**

Class 50: Pet(s): First - Deb Owen; Second - Leanne Pivac; Third - Cassandra Zickert; H/C - Natalie O'Connor.

Class 51: Bird(s): First - Deb Owen; Second - Charlotte Cashin; Third - Deb Owen; H/C - Caroline Wood & Jenny Dittmer.

Class 52: Equine portrait (head only): First -

Jenny Dittmer; Second - Charlotte Cashin; Third - Leanne Pivac; H/C - Deb Owen.



• Class 50 - Pet photo, 1st Deb Owen

■ **Barfoot & Thompson Photography - Adults**

Class 53: Lockdown antics: First - Leanne Pivac; Second - James Scott; Third - Deb Owen.

Class 54: Mostly Yellow: First - Ashley Taylor; Second - Billie Fagan; Third - Hayley Ackers; H/C - Scarlett Haywood.

Class 55: Rural NZ: First - Jo Jones; Second - Liz Maslin; Third - Deb Owen; H/C - Ellana Stubbs & Nikki Addison.



• Class 55 - Rural NZ photo, 1st Jo Jones

■ **Barfoot & Thompson Photography - Children**

Class 56: Sports: First - Piper Stubbs; Second - Cassandra Zickert; Third - Pipi Cornish; H/C - Piper Stubbs.

Class 57: People: First - Pipi Cornish; Second - Boston Stubbs.

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Show winners (cont)

• From page 7

Class 58: Local Scene: First - Piper Stubbs.

■ Harcourts the Difference Children's Indoor Classes

Ages 5 and Under

Class 60: FLORAL - Floral arrangement in a sand or vaseline saucer: First (pictured) - George Loveday; Second - Lily Bradley; Third - Rosa Burke; H/C Claudine & Lachlan (*first names only from Helensville After School Care - HASC).

Class 61: CRAFT - Decorated hard boiled egg: First - Joshua Hodder; Second - Cordelia (HASC); Third - Lily Loveday; H/C - Claudine (HASC).

Ages 6 to 9 years

Class 62: FLORAL - Floral arrangement in an eggcup: First - Sari Englefield; Second - Isla Hawkes; Third - Marley; H/C Lottie Hawkes.

Ages 10 to 12 years

Class 66: FLORAL - Floral arrangement in an eggcup: First - Zoey; Second - Kyle; Third - Heather (HASC).

Class 67: MODEL FARM: First - Sinead Stewart; Second - Molly Orange.

Class 68: HANDMADE ARTICLE - any item made by sewing, knitting, embroidery, woodwork, metal work etc: First - Abbie Burke; Second - Ethan Kelly; Third - Ethan Kelly.

Class 69: CRAFT - Creature created from fruit or vegetable: First - Isabella; Second - Kyle; Third - Heather (HASC).

Ages 13 to 16 years

Class 72: HANDMADE ARTICLE - any item made by sewing, knitting, embroidery, woodwork, metal work etc: First - Olivia Kelly.

■ Special Kaipara College Rap Song Competition

Sponsored by Paper Plus Select Helensville and Mapu-I-Musika Therapy Fale.

First - Martha Kormornicki (Yr 10); Second - Jamie Robinson (Yr 9); Third - Miller Corric (Yr 9).



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Labour List MP
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For appointments and assistance please phone:

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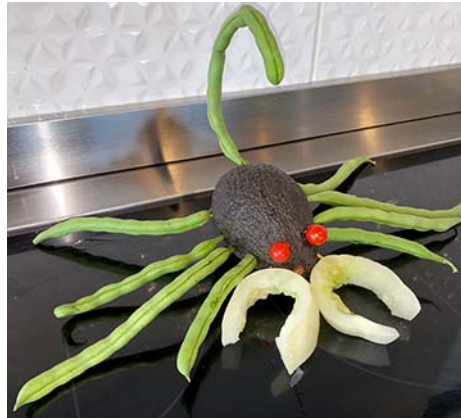
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• Class 63 - Creature made from fruit or vege,
1st Oliver Hodder

Class 63: CRAFT - Creature created from fruit or vegetable: First - Oliver Hodder; Second - Dylan Burke; Third - Darcey; H/C Zac & Calvin (HASC).

Class 64: MODEL FARM OR GARDEN: First - Oliver Hodder; H/C - Leo (HASC).

Class 65: BAKING - Homemade sweet: First - Piper Stubbs; Second - McKenzie King; Oliver Hodder.



• Class 68 - Handmade
article, 1st Abbie Burke

Testimonial

I would highly recommend Lesley to anyone looking to sell or buy property. She is very professional and friendly and helped us through the purchase process. Lesley has a very good knowledge of the market and was great to deal with. She contributed lots of effort and was fast and efficient to make sure all parties were happy.

- Craig & Tania

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It's a whale of a tail

Five local schools are making mini whale tails as part of the Auckland-wide World Wildlife Fund Whale Tales Art Trail.

The trail features 80 life-size 'whale tails' called 'Big Broos'. Painted by artists, they are on display throughout the Auckland region until April 18.

Joining those life-size tails from mid-March will be almost 30 'pods' of smaller whale tails called Pēpi Pods, decorated primarily by primary school children around Auckland.

The Helensville pod, sponsored by Harcourts the Difference in Commercial Road, will consist of five smaller tails decorated by pupils from Helensville, Parakai, Kaukapakapa, Waioneke, and Woodhill schools. Once completed the pod will go in display in Helensville, most likely outside Harcourts during business hours and in a visible indoor location at other times.



• Jeff Thomson with his corrugated whale tail

Helensville News hopes to have photos of the pod in our next issue.

One of the full-size tails has been custom-made from corrugated iron by Helensville sculptor Jeff Thomson, and is on display at Fraser Park on Parnell Rise.

"I decided to make my own whale tail, rather than paint one of the standard shapes," he says. "Using second hand, weathered and coloured corrugated iron, I'm using what other people have painted

so it can still be considered a three-dimensional painting."

The Whale Tales Sculpture Trail dots Auckland's streets, parks, and open spaces to draw awareness to our ocean and marine life, particularly in and around the Hauraki Gulf. A range of events have been planned to run alongside the trail.

The whale tails have been modelled on Bryde's Whales. Only an estimated 140 to 250 remain and their status is listed as 'nationally critical'. At the end of the three month Trail, the larger whale tails will be auctioned off by Harcourts auctioneers to raise money for WWF's plans for protecting the Hauraki Gulf and particularly their work around the endangered Bryde's Whale.

For more information visit: <https://whaletales2022.org>.

point of view

I visited Parakai School and its community day last year and was impressed with the programmes and positive learning environment the staff were providing the students.

So it was a pleasure to get the really good news this month of a huge boost for school property upgrades, which means Parakai School is able to get its building upgrade underway.

The Government has provided \$21 million to 10 schools nationwide to ensure children have warm, dry, fit-for-purpose classrooms by boosting projects that are ready to begin construction but need an extra push to start.



- Marja Lubeck
Labour List MP in Kaipara ki Mahurangi
marja.lubeck@parliament.govt.nz

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AUCKLAND 2022

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 Authorised by Chris Penk, 365 Main Road, Huapai, Auckland.

the business

As we move through Phase 2 of the Covid-19 Omicron response, businesses need to be aware how this will affect their operations. Most of the changes will mean less isolation time for staff and the ability to get back to work quicker if your workplace is affected by Covid-19.

Most businesses will realistically be hit by Omicron at some point, and I would urge every business to get prepared now if they haven't already. First, have processes in place to help prevent the spread of the virus among employees, so staff don't all need to isolate at the same time. Second, having a good understanding of the rules around isolation for Covid-positive staff, close contacts, testing options including RATs, and what support is available to staff that need extended time away from work beyond allocated sick pay.

The introduction of the close contact exemption scheme means you can register your business as a critical service if it fits the criteria. The exemptions allow staff to work even if they are a confirmed close contact, as long as they are fully vaccinated, asymptomatic, and follow strict rules. Also people who can work alone can keep working in their bubble of one, meaning people like farmers, builders, and plumbers can keep working without having to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a confirmed case.

The government has also released a new Covid Support Payment of up to \$24,000 for businesses struggling with a downturn during the Red Light setting. This payment can be applied for now and will be paid out fortnightly for up to six weeks. For details on how to register your business for the exemption scheme and on financial support, visit business.govt.nz.

The minimum wage goes up by \$1.20 per hour on April 1. This will hit some businesses hard, particularly those in hospitality where wages are often the highest cost to their businesses.

The return of the Covid Support Payment is great news and will be the saviour of some businesses. But our local businesses have been calling for this since we re-entered the Red Light setting and it feels like it has come frustratingly late in the game - and while minimum wage increases are important, I'm struggling to understand how the government is justifying this as the right time. Hopefully the minimum wage increase in April will also equate to more spending money available in people's back pockets.

- Mark Dennis, Chair
 North West Country Business Assn



from our local MP

As much as we all want certainty in life, some level of uncertainty is inevitable. We are resilient as human beings and it's the uncertainties that often make us stronger.

But when there is a constant and widespread level of uncertainty, this predictably spills over into our mental health and well-being, beyond our natural ability to manage. This is the type of environment that places more pressure on families, strains our finances, weakens our children's education, and reduces opportunities for the future.

In the past few years, it seems that uncertainty hangs over New Zealand like a dark cloud. My electorate office is frequently being contacted by constituents with concerns about the issues facing us:

- We don't understand the Covid-19 rules for self-isolation when a family member tests positive.
- Some health providers are refusing to provide treatment for our children under 12 who aren't vaccinated, even though they don't need to be.
- The banks won't provide lending because we ordered takeaways or did the Christmas shopping.
- We seem to be paying more for food and petrol every time we visit the supermarket or fill up at the pump - not forgetting the escalating interest rates - making other necessities less affordable.
- When teachers test positive for Covid-19, our children can't attend school or day-care until a negative test is returned.

Today, the outlook for everyday New Zealanders is just more and more uncertainty. The government needs to provide assurance and clarity on these key issues so we can get on with our lives. It also needs to focus on controlled, quality spending for critical infrastructure, so Kiwis can once again have confidence for their future and have the opportunity to get ahead.

I acknowledge the challenges these issues are creating for our people and the detrimental impact this is having on our mental health. My office is open to any of you who are confronted with issues like these, or if you simply wish to express any concerns you may have. We're here to listen, so please don't hesitate to contact myself or one of my friendly staff if you'd like to chat.

- Chris Penk, MP for Kaipara ki Mahurangi
 chris.penkmp@parliament.govt.nz | Ph: 09 412 2496.



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local board matters

More and more often we receive complaints from members of the public who have witnessed poor behaviour on our beaches, reserves, and from small construction sites.

They tell us they phone the council but get no action, even where these are clear breaches of bylaw, or other central government legislation that the council has authority to enforce, such as the containment of construction waste and sediment run-off.

About 18 months ago I discovered myself, while trying to report an issue with vehicles illegally parked on a reserve, that three of my usual go-to Compliance Team personnel had all left the organisation, and had not been replaced.

It turned out that Covid-related budget cuts had taken a knife to this front-line department, to the point that the nearest Compliance Officer was now based in Henderson. Not a single Compliance Team member remained in Rodney!

That, together with political pressure to cut staff costs, is keenly felt by the Local Board and residents in these situations.

As if getting compliance enforcement wasn't already difficult enough, it was now impossible. Added to that, Council continues to review and strengthen existing bylaws, without providing the additional staffing resources to enforce them.

Most people don't need a stick over them to act responsibly. However there are always a few that spoil it for others - ignoring signs requesting they keep out of bird nesting areas, allowing dogs to run off-leash, allowing their building waste and

construction site run-off to litter and pollute waterways, parking inconsiderately, commandeering large areas of public land for unacceptably long periods of time, disrespecting rahui tapu, and the like.



For this reason, the Rodney Local Board is funding two full time Compliance Wardens, who although they won't have the power to issue infringements, will be patrolling our busy beaches, parks and housing construction areas, taking a proactive, educational approach to improving public safety and environmental outcomes.

The idea is that more often than not, they will prevent bylaw breaches before they occur.

When a family pulls up in the car next to a protected shorebird area and proceeds to let the dog out, and unload cricket gear for instance, our Compliance Wardens will be able to give them a friendly pointer that there may be other more appropriate parts of the beach for them to enjoy those activities. They may see a motorhome pull into a reserve where there are already the maximum number of campers present, and be able to show them a map of some alternative sites.

They will also be able to approach contractors on building sites and ask they rectify any waste and run-off issues.

Obviously, where they witness wilful breaches they will have quick access to the nearest Compliance Officer who can then attend and deal with it.

We plan to run this as a pilot for one year, the hoped outcome being increased awareness and fewer complaints. If the pilot proves successful, in that there is a clear need for increased staffing levels in Auckland Council's compliance department, we will be able to use the data gathered to advocate for that.

- Beth Houlbrooke

Deputy Chair, Rodney Local Board
beth.houlbrooke@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Local Board meeting

Rodney Local Board's next business meeting will be held online via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, March 16, starting 3pm. For a link to join the meeting email: RodneyLocalBoard@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

All local board meeting agendas and minutes are published online - visit: infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

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HELENSVILLE NEWS - PUBLICATION INFORMATION

■ **APRIL 2022 deadline: Tuesday, 22nd March, 2022**

ISSUE DUE OUT TUESDAY, April 5th 2022

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■ **Free Subscriptions to Online Edition:**

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■ **Editorial:** Ph 420 7215 or 021 178 5568.

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community tidbits from town and around

■ LIONS POP-UP BOOK FAIR

The Helensville Lions Club will hold a special one-day pop-up Book Fair in Helensville War Memorial Hall from 9am to 4pm on Saturday, March 12.

Those attending must provide Covid vaccination certificates, and numbers in the hall will be limited according to Red Level rules.

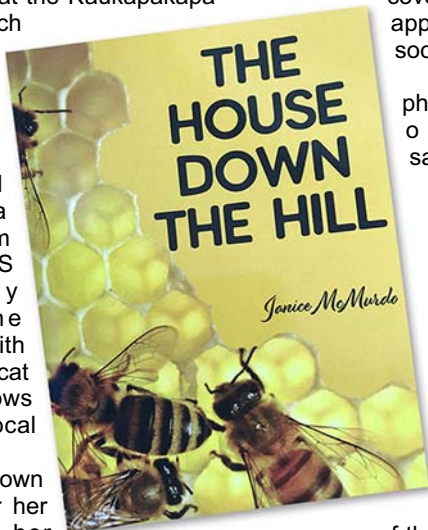
While a little smaller than the club's regular twice-yearly book fairs, there will still be thousands of fiction and non-fiction books for sale with nothing over \$2, and children's books for just 50c.

■ KAUKAPAKAPA LIBRARY

Locals can meet Helensville author Janice McMurdo with her new book 'The House Down the Hill', at the Kaukapakapa Library on Sunday, March 20 from 9am to 1pm.

As with her first two books, 'The Bird's Nest' and 'Wait for the Tide', her latest is also set on the South Head Peninsula. It features a drug boss from Auckland, a former SAS Australian Army neighbour, and the eccentric Georgina with her bees, chooks and cat 'Mr Wilson', and follows the operation of a local meth lab.

Janice is a well-known Helensville identity, for her catering as well as her writing. 'The House Down the Hill' has been dedicated to the late John Perry who, as a child, had a cat named Mr Wilson.



Kaukapakapa Library is open in conjunction with the Kaukapakapa market. For more information email Megan at: threehorses@xtra.co.nz or phone 021 959 017.

■ KAUKAPAKAPA MARKET

Live piano keyboard music from Jessica will set the mood at the next Kaukapakapa market on Sunday, March 20 from 8.30am to 1pm. Expect a fresh experience with new stall holders joining the market each month; stalls will range from locally hand-made crafts and fresh fruit and vegetables to used goods, clothing, collectibles, books and plants - with freshly made coffee to keep shopping energy levels up.

Those attending must wear face coverings, use the QR Tracing app or sign in, and maintain 2m social distancing.

For more information phone Sarah on 027 483 1542 or email her at: sarah1@maxnet.co.nz.

New college classrooms

Kaipara College is to get four new classrooms thanks to recently announced government spending on short-term roll growth classrooms.

Kaipara College is one of three schools to benefit from \$4.5 million being spent in the Kaipara ki Mahurangi and Whangaparaoa electorates.

The school will receive four new rooms, while Dairy Flat School will get two new classrooms and Orewa Beach School one.

"I know the College has been experiencing roll growth and pressure on its existing classrooms for some time, which the four new classrooms will help relieve," said Marja Lubeck, the Labour MP based in the Kaipara ki Mahurangi electorate.

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