



HDC NEWS



Recyclable and Rubbish Collection

By the time you read this, the first collection of kerbside recycling will have gone ahead. We hope it worked well for you and that any problems have been quickly attended to.

It seems that there are still questions about why you have to use official prepaid bags rather than the cheap ones that can be obtained for 95 cents for five at the supermarket.



The answer is that the \$1.50 includes the cost of the bag, the cost to collect it full of rubbish from outside your home and to dispose of the full bag. So it's the cost of the whole service, not just the cost of the bag. We think it's pretty good value for money.

We could have gone with stickers that you put on your own bags, but this is seen as less convenient for the majority of users. Having standard yellow bags also makes it quicker and easier for the contractor to see that the bag of rubbish has been paid for rather than looking for a coloured sticker.

Elected Members' Diary

Meetings for the week of the 7th to 13th July 2008:

No scheduled meetings.



Did you know?

Facts of the Day

Land Drainage is hugely important to keep the Hauraki Plains functioning as a farming area.

There are 675 km of drains and 95.6 km of stop-banks with over 120 floodgates to provide flood and tidal protection, groundwater removal and general management of rainfall runoff.

The District has 49 pump stations with 66 pumps that operate, on average, for 16,000 hours a year at a cost of \$160,000.



Your Libraries - More than books



Thanks to a generous increase to our budget from Council, the libraries are this year embarking on a process of expanding the range of our collections. While books will always be the heart and soul of the libraries, we now have DVD's, music CD's, audio books, many more magazine titles, a range of newspapers and access to the on-line EPIC database, which is a general research database useful for people wanting to do research on any subject.

All you bookworms out there needn't worry, the increased budget will also mean more books as well. So come on in and check out what we have to offer, we think we will have something for everyone.

Also, we are now open from 9.30am to 12.30pm on Saturdays in Paeroa and Waihi.

Book Blurbs

Every month Hauraki District Libraries are adding new books to their stock. Here is a sample of those added to the shelves during the month of June.

'Glitz' by Louise Bagshaw

The four beautiful Chambers girls are rolling in money, care of the fund set up by their reclusive, super-rich Uncle Clem and don't think twice about the extravagance of their glamorous lifestyles until they are summoned by Uncle Clem to his mansion in the Seychelles. His sudden engagement to Bai-Ling could mean their party is over. Will the four of them unite against this threat or is it every woman for herself and, without money, who will learn to stand on her own two feet and who will fall...

'The Dark Tide' by Andrew Gross

Karen's bad luck starts with her husband's investments going wrong and the sudden death of a much-loved family pet. Then one morning Charlie takes the train to work - straight into a lethal terrorist blast, and all his family has left are memories. Or is it? When the family starts to receive terrifying threats Karen turns to Detective Ty Hauck for help. He is determined to keep the family safe, but everyone who tries to investigate Charlie's death has a way of ending up dead...

'Belong to me' by Marisa de los Santos

Cornelia Brown surprised even herself when she felt drawn from the city into the suburbs and her judgemental neighbour, Piper Truitt, challenges her resolve, but Lake, who is also a recent arrival, encourages her with a shared love of literature and old movies. As their individual stories unfold, the women become entangled in a web of trust, betrayal, love and loss that challenges them in ways they never imagined, and that ultimately teaches them what it means for one human being to belong to another.

'Aftershock' by Quintin Jardine

Until Sugar Dean is found dead on a local golf course, the police on DDC Skinner's patch are beginning to think that they might be the victims of their own success. Serious crime seems to be at an all-time low in Edinburgh, leaving detectives twiddling their thumbs. But that is about to change... There is something uncannily familiar about this murder, and it is making Skinner nervous. The body has been 'laid out' just like the bodies in a previous case - a case that was solved. Or was it?

And whether you live in Ngatea, Paeroa or Waihi, you will find these books, and many others, available in your local library, waiting for you to enjoy.

Are you Getting Value for Money?

This is a question that you should be asking about all Council services and is certainly a question Council should be asking itself, or more precisely, "Are we giving value for money?" The current round of consultation on our 'Levels of Service' asks just this question over a wide range of services that Council provides.

The bus trips around the District were a great success (apart from the Waihi one that could not happen because of the Gorge being closed). The various workshops are still in progress but we are getting great feedback about our levels of service and whether people think they are getting value for money.

Thank you for your input. Anyone who wishes to have a say on the matter, but has not been able to participate in any of the trips or workshops, can get a questionnaire from one of the Council offices and can fill it in and hand it back to Council before Friday 11th June. We need to get all the information analysed soon in order to get on with the next step in developing our Long Term Plan.

Change in Climate Predictions

Council was informed at its last meeting that the official predictions of the effect of climate change for our district have been amended. New information indicates that instead of expecting to get wetter in this area we are now expected to get slightly drier. This change has been added to our position on climate change.

Our Council intends to take a conservative approach to its preparations for climate change by adopting a moderate position. The new information perhaps vindicates our approach as the science behind the climate change debate is still in a state of flux and it would not be prudent for Council to take any steps that would lead to high expenditure to prepare for something that lacks certainty. We await developments with open minds.

Hearings Committee Accredited

If you are a regular reader of this page you may remember that we commented on the training courses that our elected members had been on to continue their accreditation for sitting on hearings and to update their skills in the process. Three members went on a course for Chairs of Hearings, which involved two assignments. An additional two members went on the initial course, which also involved two assignments. The courses are run by the University of Auckland.

In the terms of the Resource Management Act the Chairman and the majority of panel members need to be accredited to make decisions on RMA matters. We are pleased to announce that all our members passed and so our whole Hearing Committee has the required accreditation.

Composting

Back to rubbish and that buzzword "sustainability" again:

If you are keen to reduce the rubbish that still ends up in your refuse bag because it can't go into your recycling bin, you can compost your organic waste. This means all kitchen and garden waste - anything that is of living origin, although some may prefer to only compost material of plant origin. In fact even bones and hair, while they are very slow to decompose provide a good source of minerals for plants, in particular, beans.

While composting is a science in itself, good results can be achieved by anyone using simple methods. Here are some of the options:

- Use a plastic compost bin, which can be purchased from your nearest garden supplier.
- Make your own bin using posts and fence palings or whatever other material is available. Remember to leave a "door" at the bottom, out of which you can shovel the decomposed material when it is ready. It is better to have two bins - one that is filling and one where the compost is ready for use.
- Dig a hole or trench in your garden and put your organic waste in it. Cover each layer with earth until full then start again.
- Pile your waste in a corner of your garden. Cover periodically with a layer of earth, lawn clippings or dead leaves. Fork it through from time to time to get air into the compost.

Decomposition is helped by allowing air to get to the compost as it encourages the right sort of bacteria. If you do this, your compost will not smell bad. The heat generated by compost is supposed to kill weed seeds but be careful you do not add garden waste from perennial weeds such as oxalis, convolvulus, twitch and tradescantia because they seem to thrive in compost conditions and you will simply add them to the rest of your garden when you use the compost

Compost heaps can give you added bonuses. The heat does not kill pumpkin, avocado or even tomato seeds and you may well find these plants growing where you use the product.

I harvested 10 pumpkins this year from a plant that grew from my compost heap. I had to start another heap, but that was not difficult. Smaller gardens may not have room for such rambling plants but if you have a large garden it can give you food throughout the winter.

