



HDC NEWS



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Come and join the Scottish fun and games

What do pipe bandmen, highland dancers, heavyweight field athletes and teddy bears have in common? They'll all be flaunting tartan at tomorrow's 23rd annual Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo, expected to draw up to 8000 visitors.

The popular heavyweight field events are the original extreme sports – think caber tossing, Gaelic hammer throwing, and a farmer's walk with a 160lb weight in each hand. And for the first time at Paeroa Domain, they're doubling as the New Zealand Highland Heavyweight Championships.

This prestigious contest is usually held at the Waipu Highland Games, which have been running since 1871. "But after it was washed out by torrential rain this year, we're delighted we're able to host it," says longtime organising committee member Alistair Buchanan. Up and coming athletes can vie for honours, too, in the Junior Highland Games for 9 to 16-year-olds.

Fashion in the field gets a new twist for 2016. 'Tartan in the Park' entrants will also be offered with a piece of tartan, scissors, a stapler, and a teddy bear to dress.

Pipes and drums are still the heartbeat of the occasion, from the strains of solo pipers to the stirring clans march and massed band displays. The 43-piece Medallion Drums will perform in the clans village by day and again at the evening Tattoo, which is unique among Highland Games in New Zealand. King Country-raised country music star Dennis Marsh will also entertain games goers; and following the release of his 2015 album *Lest we Forget*, will lead a World War I salute during the Tattoo.

Other special guests include the four-legged kind: Highland cattle from the Macca Fold of Tirau. The breed captured hearts at last year's Games, with one man so smitten that he bought a calf on the spot as a Valentine's Day gift for his wife.

Two giant stadium screens will again flank the arena where the evening tattoo will take place. Used in conjunction with roving cameras throughout the day, these will give people a close-up view of simultaneous action around the Domain, from mace flourishing to the axemen's carnival, and a chance to enjoy replayed highlights such as the clan street march.

Games-goers are encouraged to share their own pictures in the event's annual photographic competition. The four categories for 2016 are Spirit of the Games, Action, Expressions of Interest (competitor or spectator facial expressions) and Evening Tattoo (low light shots of the spectacular finale).

The Council pitches in to ensure that Domain facilities are top-notch for the big day and night, which has grown from humble beginnings as a small pipe bands competition. "Staff and councillors give huge support to our crew of 50 to 60 volunteers, right through to the Mayor opening the Games," says Alistair. "Last year Councillor Julie Bubb did a great job as a compere, and former Mayor Basil Morrison still joins the official party. It all helps make this a real community event, from which the proceeds go back into the community."



FULL SWING: Karen Moffat-McLeod of Whitianga shot this winning action picture for last year's photography competition

PUBLIC NOTICES

Temporary Road Closure

Pursuant to the Section 11(e) of the Tenth Schedule of the Local Government Act 2002, notice is hereby given that for the purpose of bridge maintenance, the following road will be closed to ordinary vehicular traffic for the period indicated below. During the period of closure provision will be made for ordinary vehicular traffic, which would otherwise use the road, to use alternative routes.

Date of closure: Monday 22 February 2016.

Time of closure: 9.00 am to 3.00 pm.

Road to be closed: 5485 – 5524 Waitekauri Road (Bridge No. 3).

Alternative provision for ordinary vehicular traffic will be made with signs, cones and barriers to redirect traffic on detour.

It will be an offence under the above regulations for any person otherwise than under authority of an authorised permit to use the road for ordinary vehicular traffic during the period of closure.

Council and Committee Meetings

Pursuant to Section 46 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, public notice is hereby given that the following meeting will be held in the Council Office, William Street, Paeroa.

Director Licensing Committee

Thursday, 25 February 2016 - 9.00 am

L D Cavers
Chief Executive
Hauraki District Council

Quick Tips for Smart Water Use



Swimmers - cover up

If you have a home swimming pool, covering it when not in use can cut water evaporation by as much as 90%, reducing the need for top-ups.

Amping up the attack on yellow invader

Have you spotted any yellow bristle grass?

Its distinctive spiky seed heads begin to appear in late December, but are most obvious in January and February.

It may look harmless growing on our country roadsides, where it has notably increased over recent years. But when this invasive annual seeding weed jumps the fence, it poses a serious threat to pasture.

What's the problem?

Yellow bristle grass is unpalatable to farm stock after the seed heads emerge, from about mid-January until the first frost. So animals avoid it, meaning pasture is under-utilised. Meanwhile the seeds are rapidly further dispersed by animals, water, soil movement, machinery, and through contaminated hay or maize brought into paddocks.

Once established, yellow bristle grass is notoriously hard to remove, and is becoming a significant agricultural issue in the Waikato.

What are we doing about it?

The Council is collaborating with the Waikato Regional Council, AgResearch and roading contractors to improve control of yellow bristle grass on our District road network. Traditionally we carry out two complete rounds of chemical spraying each year, generally in October and March, planned for when it will best combat spring germination and autumn growth and keep road signs and marker posts clear and visible.

In a key change this year, we've launched a January/February network-wide spray campaign. In the future, to minimise seed spread during this period when the seed heads are mature, there will be no roadside mowing during this time.

When we do mow, our contractors will stop short of the fenceline – leaving a barrier of tall growing grasses to inhibit the spread of yellow bristle grass into roadside paddocks – and avoid having runoff that could wash seed into the paddocks.

We'll follow up with autumn spraying as usual. Then the need for spraying in spring will be monitored – the objective being to allow winter weeds and broadleaf to remain and become established around roadside traffic service structures so yellow bristle grass can't re-establish.

What can farmers do?

Some AgResearch guidelines

For roadside spraying to be effective, farmers need to implement their own parallel controls.

To minimise the chances of importing yellow bristle grass onto the farm:

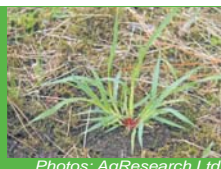
- Have agricultural contractors clean their vehicles and equipment before accessing your property.
- Inspect incoming hay; and if you have any infested hay, feed it out only to areas where yellow bristle grass can be readily controlled by means such as glyphosate spray.
- Ensure that all incoming maize chopped for silage gets into the pit (seed in the silage will be killed).

To minimise the spread of yellow bristle grass within the farm:

- Reduce seed production by spraying before seedheads emerge, or by topping pre or post-grazing.
- Avoid moving stock from infested paddocks or roadside to clean paddocks.
- Clean agricultural equipment after use in any infested paddocks.
- Make silage rather than hay if yellow bristle grass is present.

More information on managing yellow bristle grass is available at:

www.agpest.co.nz/?pesttypes=yellow-bristle-grass, or
www.dairynz.co.nz/feed/pasture/pests/yellow-bristle-grass



Photos: AgResearch Ltd

Fire ban lifted, but safety is still a burning issue

Instead of burning rubbish, it's much safer to dispose of it at your nearest transfer station. With a restricted fire season now in place across Hauraki and other districts, that's a pointer not just from the Council but the president of Local Government New Zealand, Lawrence Yule.

The lifting of a total fire ban this week means open air fires can now be lit, but only with a fire permit. These are available free from any of our Council service centres, by applying at least 48 hours (two working days) in advance. Each application is considered on its merits, taking prevailing weather conditions into account, and a site inspection may be needed.

Rubbish fires spark particular safety concerns, and taking your rubbish to the Waihi or Paeroa transfer stations eliminates the risk of creating smoke nuisance and smelly or toxic fumes. But permits are required for all types of open air fires, also including hangi and cooking fires, braziers, campfires, open air incinerators, and controlled vegetation burns.

Even with a permit, the person lighting the fire is legally responsible for supervising and controlling it. We also ask that you notify neighbours as a courtesy, and avoid lighting a fire if strong winds are blowing or forecast. Tyres, plastics, bale wrap and similar materials should not be burnt. Thanks for your cooperation!

Permits may be suspended if weather conditions make fires a danger.

Keep it Green



Think before you bin it!

Our public rubbish bins get high use over the summer holidays – but recently they've been filling extra quickly, with a spike in the amount and frequency of business and local household rubbish being dumped in them.

Many of our conventional street and reserve bins have now been replaced with the new higher capacity solar compactor type: we've just finished installing 70 of these around the District. However they were not designed or intended for household or commercial rubbish.

We remind people not to use public bins for this purpose; and to discourage others from doing so. Meanwhile we've written letters to some business owners, and are monitoring particular problem areas.