



HDC NEWS



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81 years of outstanding service acknowledged

WANTED: *Unpaid drainage committee members, with management skills and a strong interest in something that most people take for granted. Must be community-minded and enjoy a challenge.*

It's a job few of us would fancy. However, two men who took it on 60 years ago and 21 years ago respectively and who have only recently retired were last week recognised by the Council. The outstanding service of Graham Morrison and Guy Speedy was acknowledged at a presentation attended by members of their families, councillors, staff, and drainage committee chairmen.

Mayor John Tregidga noted that the pair's long record has been especially significant as Hauraki is one of the few areas in New Zealand where land drainage is managed by the District Council rather than the Regional Council. "[We are] aware of the critical importance of land drainage management to the wellbeing and productivity of the Hauraki Plains, and wish to keep this at a District level. Our Drainage District committees are established as advisory committees to Council, to oversee this important function."

Graham has notched six decades on the Komata North Drainage District Committee, from the major flood year of 1954 to 2014. He represented the Ohinemuri County Council on the Hauraki Catchment Board from 1980 to 1989, until county councils were dissolved under Local Government amalgamation. From 1999 to 2011, he served as Paeroa Rural Drainage Districts representative on the Waikato Regional Council's Waihou-Piako Zone Liaison Subcommittee.

A resident of the Komata area for all of his 81 years, Graham comes from a farming background; and as well as the 1954 flood he vividly remembers the breaching of the Komata River stopbanks in 1960 which resulted in the filling of the Hikutaia basin. "I was talking to someone who had just purchased a farm here. He said that he thought he was buying it by the acre, but instead got it by the gallon."

Then Graham had barely been elected to the Hauraki Catchment Board when the 1981 flood came. "We're never going to get rid of flooding here," he says. "We can only alleviate and manage it."

But he has seen a lot of changes over the years. "In the early County Council days, a lot of the drains had been dug by hand during the depression, and they were still cleared using slashers and shovels. With the installation of major flood gates and pump stations, flooding is not as devastating as it used to be. If we can get water off the pasture within three to four days we can usually salvage it."

What has motivated Graham's long service? "When you've lived in an area all your life and enjoyed the benefits of that, you want to put something back," he says. "And if we haven't got good drainage, we haven't got farms."

Guy, 82, still recalls his first meeting with the Eastern Plains Drainage District Committee in January 1993. He took on the membership role because of "a lack of people with an interest in drains, and a desire to get better quality drainage for the ratepayers of the district." From January 1997 until 2014, Guy has concurrently served 17 years on the Western Plains Drainage District Committee – with his Hauraki Plains dairy farm being in one district and "a sizeable run-off" in the other.

Guy also represented the Eastern Plains Drainage District on the Waikato Regional Council's Zone Committee from its inception in June 1999 until October 2007. He was a member of the subcommittee which developed the Piako River Scheme reclassification from 1996 to 1998.

"There will always be challenges – we'll still be having floods in 100 years," he says. However Guy has found it satisfying to see arterial drains become well maintained and, with his wife behind him to serve ratepayers by always endeavouring to keep costs under control.

Deputy Mayor Bruce Gordon, who represents the Council on the Western Plains Drainage District Committee, says Graham and Guy's personal qualities have been major factors in the huge contributions they've made.

"As well as Graham's extraordinary length of service, he is known for his sincerity and understanding and being an all-round nice guy. Guy has been totally devoted to his drainage roles and done a lot of visiting and talking – relationships have been very important to him."

Both men have received Hauraki District Council Citizens awards for service to the community – Guy in 2008 and Graham in 2011.

Now, with the recognition of a Council gift to each of a silver tray and a set of crystal glasses, it is time for them to put their feet up and enjoy a drink.



Above: The Mayor, John Tregidga acknowledges and celebrates the outstanding service of Graham Morrison and Guy Speedy as drainage committee members.

PUBLIC NOTICE

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

TO LEASE THE WORKSHOP, OFFICE & YARD AT STEEN RD, MARAMARUA

Council are inviting expressions of interest for the leasing of the workshop, office and yard situated at the Council owned Quarry at Steen Road, Maramarua.

The floor area of the office block building is 22m² and the workshop and lunchroom is 113m². The Lease would be for one year with one right of renewal for one year.

Details of the lease are available from Council's Paeroa Service Centre, William Street, Paeroa or by phoning Robyn Kirby on 07 862 8609.

The last date for receipt of Expressions of Interest to be received is Friday 20th June at 4.00pm.

LD Cavers
Chief Executive
Hauraki District Council

JULY

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Dog owners put a ring around this date

What does your dog need besides food, water, shelter, exercise, care and attention? To be registered from July 1!

This is the date by which all dogs in the District aged three months or over should be registered. It's one of the responsibilities of dog ownership, just like providing for your dog's wellbeing, ensuring he or she is kept under control, having your animal microchipped, and advising us of any change of ownership or address.

Your registration fee pays for the administration of an up-to-date dog database; educational and adoption programmes; dog pound facilities including feeding, care, and homing or euthanasia of stray dogs; general advice on dog care; property visits by Council staff; animal control; and a 24-hour call out service.

We keep the costs as low as possible and, overall our fees compare well with those in neighbouring council districts. However there are several ways that Hauraki dog owners can save money on registration.

Having your animal neutered entitles you to a \$15 rebate off the \$80 general registration fee (proof of de-sexing must be supplied).

There's a further \$30 discount for holders of a Responsible Owner Licence, benefiting people who have a good history of dog care, control and registration. This reduces the net cost of registering a desexed dog to an especially good value \$35 – and we encourage residents to check out this option on our website, or by asking one of our helpful customer service team.

To become a Responsible Owner you'll need to pay a once-only application fee, show a good record as a dog owner in our District or another District, pass a short test on the basic facts of dog care, and have fencing that keeps your dog securely on the property while still allowing visitors to reach a door without having to pass the dog. Owners who have more than three dogs also pay less to register each animal.

You have a month to pay your registration fees - 1 July to 31 July. A penalty fee will be applied for late payments received after 31 July.

Don't rubbish our drains!

Here at the Council we can't control the weather. But we can prepare for it by getting our drains in the best possible condition to ensure that everything flows smoothly in winter. As a follow-up to summer weed spraying alongside drains, our seasonal maintenance programme now includes machine cleaning to prevent the waterways becoming clogged.

But our best efforts can be foiled if people dump grass clippings or any other rubbish in or near a drain. In the past we've found everything from garden refuse to mattresses quite literally 'ditched', especially around town fringes where urban development backs onto rural land and drains.

Often this happens during dry periods when the drains aren't doing much in the way of drainage – only to create a pile-up of debris and a potential flood risk when the rains come. While a bit of greenwaste may seem innocuous, it can cause a lot of trouble upstream and stop the drains from functioning properly. So if you're having a clean-out or moving house, please help us by disposing of rubbish responsibly!

It's also important to keep access to drains free of buildings, fences, vegetation and stored materials. The Council's drainage bylaw requires a minimum clear distance of 15m from the top edge of open drains, to allow access for maintenance staff, contractors and machines.