

**WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LAND AND WATER COMMITTEE HELD IN THE  
FUNCTION ROOM AT THE RANGIORA TOWN HALL, 303 HIGH STREET, RANGIORA ON  
TUESDAY 20 APRIL 2021 COMMENCING AT 1PM.**

**PRESENT**

Councillors S Stewart (Chairperson), N Atkinson, A Blackie, N Mealings, P Williams, P Redmond, J Ward and Mayor D Gordon.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

K Simpson (3 Waters Manager), G MacLeod (Community Greenspace Manager), S Allen (Water Environment Officer), K Steel (Ecologist – Biodiversity), and T Künkel (Governance Team Leader).

**1 APOLOGIES**

Moved: Councillor Stewart                      Seconded: Councillor Atkinson

**THAT** apologies for absence be received and sustained from Councillor K Barnett.

**CARRIED**

**2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

**3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**3.1 Minutes of a meeting of the Land and Water Committee held on Thursday  
16 February 2021**

Moved: Councillor Atkinson                      Seconded: Councillor Blackie

**THAT** the Land and Water Committee:

- (a) **Confirms**, as a true and correct record, the circulated Minutes of the meeting of the Land and Water Committee held on 16 February 2021.

**CARRIED**

**4 MATTERS ARISING**

Nil.

**5 DEPUTATION/PRESENTATIONS**

Nil.

## 6 REPORTS

### 6.1 Results of the 2020 private wells study for nitrate – Cust and Eyreton – S Allen (Water Environment Advisor)

S Allen summarised the findings of the Council's private well study done in 2020. She noted that the same 19 wells in Cust and Eyreton were again sampled for nitrate and other chemical parameters as in the 2019 study. She highlighted the following:

- There had been a decrease in the nitrate mean and median from 2019 to 2020 in both Cust and Eyreton samples. This could be due to higher rainfall prior to the 2019 study than for the 2020 study. Increased precipitation tended to lead to the increased leaching of nitrate into the groundwater. It was however too early to confirm any seasonal variations.
- Similar to 2019, one well in the Cust area measured 17.5 mg/L nitrate-nitrogen, which was above the Maximum Acceptable Value (MAV) set for nitrate in the New Zealand Drinking-water Standards for New Zealand (DWSNZ 2005, amended 2018). The owner of the private well was again notified that the water from the well did not meet DWSNZ.
- None of the other chemical parameters analysed in this pilot study were over any MAVs. Microbiological testing was not carried out due to the risk of contaminating the samples.
- It was the intention of the Council to repeat the nitrate pilot study in spring 2022 with the same wells being tested again. However, provision had been made in the 2021/31 Long Term Plan to add an additional 20 wells from two other groundwater areas in the District to the study, with the purpose of allowing for assessment of trends over time.
- The Council had produced a pamphlet on the management of private well water supply, which could be distributed to potential property owners.

Councillor Williams questioned if the MAV for nitrates were changed for the Drinking Water Safety Plans that the Council had to submit to the Ministry of Health. K Simpson confirmed that the MAV for nitrates had not been altered. However, the Ministry was still examining the results of international studies that connected the increase in bowel cancer to high nitrate levels in drinking water.

Councillor Mealings sought clarity on what type of properties had been included in the study. S Allen advised that there was a range of properties, however, all the properties had to be for domestic use. Staff had tried to include properties from various geographical areas and also wells of various depths.

Councillor Mealings also enquired what the criteria would be for choosing the additional 20 wells from the other two groundwater areas. S Allen noted that the criteria had not yet been set and was still open for discussion.

Councillor Redmond asked if it was known why the well found to be over the MAV did not comply. S Allen explained that it had been established that there was a correlation between increasing well depth and decreasing nitrate level. The well in question was only 6.7 meters deep, hence the high nitrate levels.

Councillor Stewart noted that private wells did not need to comply with the DWSNZ. S Allen confirmed that this was correct, however, it was expected that the requirement would change once the proposed Water Services Act came into effect. K Simpson advised that as part of the current consent use process for private wells applicants had to provide proof that there was access to potable water on the property at the time of the application. Ongoing compliance was, however, the responsibility of the property owner.

In response to a question from Councillor Atkinson, S Allen advised that it was expected that the \$10,000 allocation in the 2021/22 budget would be sufficient to extend the current study to include the 20 wells in the other two groundwater areas.

Councillor Ward noted that in the Ashburton area additional water had been added to water supplies with high nitrate levels to dilute the nitrate. S Allen confirmed that trials were being done as part of the Hinds/Hekeao Managed Aquifer Recharge Project. It should however be noted that large volumes of water were required to dilute the nitrate.

Councillor Mealings asked which water treatment specialists had the Council advised the well owners to contact if their wells were over a MAV. S Allen advised that the Council deliberately did not specify a specific specialist to be contacted as there were numerous water treatment specialists that could assist.

Councillor Mealings commented that the Council knew that once the Water Services Act came into effect the Council would be expected to take on the responsibility of supporting private well owners with supplies that were shared between households to be compliant with the DWSNZ. She enquired if the Council had identified how many private wells it would be taking responsibility for. K Simpson advised that the information was not yet available. He elaborated on the anticipated risk based approach that the Council would be taking and noted that a report on this matter would be submitted to the Council for consideration. A report on the proposed costs would be considered during the Council's 2021/31 Long Term Plan considerations.

Moved: Councillor P Williams      Seconded: Councillor S Stewart

**THAT** the Land and Water Committee:

- (a) **Receives** report No. 210316043773.
- (b) **Notes** the findings of the 2020 study, with one well was above the nitrate Maximum Acceptable Value (MAV) (DWSNZ 2005, amended 2018). The majority (63%) of the 18 wells in Eyreton and Cust were above half of the MAV (5.65 mg/L).
- (c) **Notes** that the landowners of the one well that was found to be over the nitrate Maximum Acceptable Value (MAV) (DWSNZ 2005, amended 2018) had been advised and was no longer using the well.
- (d) **Notes** that the median nitrate concentration for Cust, as sampled in the 2020 study, would not meet the proposed limit of a median of 5.65 mg/L nitrate-nitrogen in Plan Change 7 of the Land and Water Regional Plan for private water supply wells.
- (e) **Notes** that Waimakariri District Council and Environment Canterbury staff would continue to raise awareness of the health impacts of high nitrates, and to encourage private well owners to test water regularly, including with the publication of a 'managing a private well supply' pamphlet for the District.
- (f) **Notes** that in the draft Long Term Plan, WDC proposes to repeat this study in spring 2021 (with 10 wells in Eyreton, 10 wells in Cust, and 20 wells in areas yet to be determined). Well owners from the 2019 and 2020 sample rounds would be approached for repeat annual sampling, to allow for assessment of trends over time.
- (g) **Notes** that trends for nitrate concentration over time were not able to be concluded from data for only two years.
- (h) **Circulates** this report to the Council, Community Boards and the Waimakariri Water Zone Committee for information.

**CARRIED**

Councillor Williams noted that it was important that the public were made aware that the landowners of the well found to be over the MAV for nitrates have been advised and was no longer using the well.

Councillor Stewart supported the comments made by Councillor Williams. She commented that it was important for the public to know that there was a problem with some water supplies that did not comply with DWSNZ. The study conducted by the University of Otago that found a correlation between bowel cancer and high nitrate levels in drinking water was very worrisome. Especially in light of the lack of information regarding the water quality of private wells.

## **7 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

### **7.1 Canterbury Biodiversity Champions Meeting 9 April Agenda and Presentation**

Moved: Councillor N Atkinson

Seconded: Councillor P Williams

**THAT** the Land and Water Committee:

- (a) **Receives** and notes the information contained Item 7.1.

## **8 PORTFOLIO UPDATES**

### **8.1 Biodiversity – Councillor S Stewart**

- Arohata te Awa was progressing well, and it was anticipated that the first planting would be done along the stop bank at Revells Road in Kaiapoi in autumn.
- Waimakariri Biodiversity Trust was calling for Trustees and if members were interested they could contact Judith Roper-Lindsay.
- She encouraged members to attend the upcoming Honda Forest planting days. It was noted that the General Manager of Honda would be unveiling signage at the Honda Forest on 8 May 2021.

### **8.2 Land based Indigenous Reserves (Including River Margins) – Councillor A Blackie**

- The Mahi Tahi Joint Development Committee was discussing the Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust taking over the “on the ground” management of the proposed Heritage and Mahinga Kai Area in Kaiapoi.

## **9 QUESTIONS**

Nil.

## **10 URGENT GENERAL BUSINESS**

Nil.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Land and Water Committee was scheduled to be held at 1:00pm, Tuesday 18 May 2021 in the Function Room, Rangiora Town Hall.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 1.43PM.

*A.L. Stewart*

Chairperson

20 July 2021

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Date

**BRIEFING**

*Review of Cam River Enhancement Fund projects – S Allen (Water Environment Advisor)*