
**CONFIRMED MINUTES
OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THIRD FLOOR, OFFICE OF THE WAITAKI DISTRICT
COUNCIL, 20 THAMES STREET, OAMARU
ON TUESDAY, 24 JUNE 2025 AT 11:00 AM**

PRESENT: Mayor Gary Kircher, Cr Rebecca Ryan, Cr Jim Hopkins, Cr Tim Blackler Cr Jeremy Holding, Cr Brent Cowles, Cr Guy Percival, Cr Courtney Linwood, Cr Jim Thomson.

IN ATTENDANCE: PAR Committee Chair Simon Neale
Alex Parmley (Chief Executive)
Roger Cook (Director, Natural & Built Environment)
Paul Hope (Director, Support Services)
Joanne O'Neill (Director, Strategy, Performance & Design)
Lisa Baillie (Director, Community Engagement and Experience)
Amanda Nicholls (Finance Manager)
Jason Lilley (Livestream Support)
Arlene Goss (Governance Lead/Minutes)

IN ATTENDANCE FOR SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS:

Ōmarama Airfield Limited (Chairman Clive Geddes on Zoom)
Whitestone Contracting Limited, (Chief Executive Paul Bisset and George Kelcher)
Tourism Waitaki Limited (General Manager Dr Philippa Agnew and Chairman Mike McElhinney)

This meeting was livestreamed and can be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/live/cx9oA1V0drA?si=i4KZPutBf3JU7TX>

The Chair declared the meeting open at 11.00am and welcomed everyone present.

1 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED WDC 2025/075

Moved: Cr Tim Blackler
Seconded: Cr Jim Thomson

That the apologies received from Cr Hana Halalele and Cr John McCone be accepted.

CARRIED

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PUBLIC FORUM

The following speakers were registered for the public forum:

Public Forum: Arriving at 11am:

Alex Famlton on Water Reform
Hamish Carswell on Water Reform
Ken Mitchell on Water Reform
David Wilson on Beach Road
Hamish McFarlane on Waihemo Recreation Reserve Grazing Licence

Arriving at 11.30am:

Simon Laming on Water Reform
Peter de Reus on Water Reform
Wayne Murphy on Water Reform

Alex Familton

Mr Familton was concerned about the water proposal and the possibility of amalgamation as a result. He was concerned about the Morrison Low consultant's report. He believed there was a focus by that consultant on amalgamation, and he disagreed with this.

He did not believe council needed to amalgamate with other councils to get staff expertise. He said the skills were already available in the community. He said the district would lose expertise if the four councils amalgamated.

Cr Hopkins asked what Mr Familton envisaged when he used the term amalgamation, and noted that the Minister had said "the status quo is not an option". Mr Familton said he meant the amalgamation of water services, not councils generally.

Hamish Carswell

Mr Carswell said he was from Dunback. He said the four-council approach was beyond comprehension. He had lived in the Gore district for many years. The Clutha and Gore district finances were in disarray. Why would WDC want to combine finances with these councils with big financial problems? He talked about Southland District Council choosing to push back against the district and believed that Waitaki should do the same.

He claimed that Mayor Kircher tried to convince the Mayor of Southland to join the four-party approach but was not able to. The Mayor challenged this as inaccurate, and asked Mr Carswell to withdraw it.

The Mayor answered questions raised by Mr Carswell during his verbal submission. Councillors did not have any questions of Mr Carswell.

Ken Mitchell

Mr Mitchell introduced himself. He had a history of working in the power industry. He said water and energy were important to this district. The number one issue to Network Waitaki in the electricity reforms was the protection of assets. It was the same for Council, which needed to protect the water assets and manage them in the best interests of the people.

He suggested that Council should pre-empt the government's move. The only solution that worked in the power industry was in the districts that formed a power trust that was 100% consumer owned. There was an advantage to having nobody in the room that could make a profit from selling the assets.

As a result of the power reforms the government was getting billions of dollars of tax and dividends that it did not get before. Big was not better and more efficient. It was slower and more cumbersome.

David Wilson

Mr Wilson congratulated councillors and staff on achieving a \$3 million grant towards Project Reclaim. He said Beach Road was an important alternative route if the state highway was not available. It was a very important road but was unfortunately closed. He viewed the \$3 million grant as an opportunity to maintain Beach Road. He asked Council to consider bypassing the holes and protecting the road.

The Mayor said Council had asked staff to bring a report to a future meeting looking at how that money should be allocated.

Hamish McFarlane

Mr McFarlane is the chairman of the Puketapu Trust. He spoke in advance of Council's decision on the grazing licence at the Waihemo Recreation Reserve in Palmerston. He would like the whole area

retired from grazing at once, and not a staged retirement as proposed by the Hearings Committee. He said the area was intensively farmed, and under the Reserves Act the public should have free access, and the flora and fauna should be protected.

He asked councillors not to be swayed by arguments and doubts that the area would be a fire risk, full of weeds, or there would not be enough volunteers.

Cr Holding asked about trust's capacity in terms of volunteers and equipment. It has a good core of eight people who are capable of carrying out work in the reserve, and who have access to appropriate equipment.

Cr Blackler asked about concerns around gorse and broom. Mr McFarlane said the trust was starting with a clean slate and the native seedlings would eventually over-top the weed seedlings and block them out.

Simon Laming

Mr Laming claimed council services had been mismanaged for years. He said the four council water services proposal added another layer of bureaucracy and he disagreed with this. He did not see any benefit. He said the best option was a stand-alone CCO led by people with strong skills in business.

He said the council was inept and this was shown by council's management of the Oamaru Airport. He then outlined issues he had with the chief executive over the Oamaru Airport manager's role.

He called for Council to employ a contractor to manage the airport and named his preferred contractor. He criticised the mayor, chief executive and councillors for how this issue had been managed.

The Mayor responded to Mr Laming on the issues he raised.

Mr Laming claimed the chief executive refused to meet with him and there was a discussion held on this matter, with the chief executive clarifying that he did not refuse, but his diary was full so he referred Mr Laming to the manager responsible for the airport so Mr Laming would not have to wait to see someone. The Mayor gave both the Chief Executive and Director responsible for the airport the opportunity to respond, which they did. He then offered Mr Laming a meeting with the chief executive but Mr Laming did not accept this offer.

Peter de Reus

Mr de Reus said the ratepayers own the water assets. He was concerned that shifting water assets to another entity would lose local control and local knowledge. It seemed to him that the reason for this was to allow Council to borrow and spend more money. He called for Council to push back on the government.

He asked why workshops were secret. This caused poor communication and understanding by ratepayers. He also objected to the Thames Street trial and the use of the library as a service centre.

Mr de Reus called on Council not to fund minority groups or climate change, or make things difficult for farmers.

The Mayor said he agreed with a lot of what Mr de Reus said. Rate increases were a challenge and the biggest cause of this was water services. Cr Hopkins spoke about the imposition of the water proposal by central government. Mr de Reuss said Council had a responsibility to push back on this.

Wayne Murphy

Mr Murphy sent his apologies as he was in hospital. Another time for him to speak would be arranged.

Annie Baxter

Annie Baxter asked to speak. She supported the in-house option for water services. She said the democratic voice needed to be listened to. People had read the consultation document and considered the options. Now it was time to listen to them.

4 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

4.1 PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27 MAY 2025

On Page 16 of the current agenda there is a section in italics attributed to Cr Cowles. Cr Hopkins asked for this to be changed, as there was a sentence in that section that should not be in italics. Cr Cowles agreed.

RESOLVED WDC 2025/076

Moved: Cr Jim Hopkins
Seconded: Cr Brent Cowles

That the Council confirms the Public minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 May 2025, as circulated, as a true and correct record of that meeting, with the change noted above.

CARRIED

5 LEADERSHIP REPORTS

5.1 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor updated councillors on a number of issues and events that he felt were relevant to the community, that had happened since his last Mayor's report on 29 April 2025.

RESOLVED WDC 2025/077

Moved: Cr Guy Percival
Seconded: Cr Courtney Linwood

That Council receives and notes the information.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12.20pm and reconvened at 12.45pm. The next item was brought forward on the agenda to suit guest attendees.

6.3 COUNCIL CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS - FINAL STATEMENTS OF INTENT 2024/2025

The purpose of this report was to formally receive the Final Statements of Intent for 2025/26 from three Council Controlled Organisations. A Statement of Intent lays out the intentions for the next financial year and the objectives to which it contributes.

Following the decision to transfer the provision of health services from Waitaki District Health Services Limited to Te Whatu Ora/Health New Zealand, from 1 July 2024, there was no requirement for that company to submit a Statement of Intent for 2025/26.

Tourism Waitaki

General Manager Dr Philippa Agnew and Chairman Mike McElhinney joined the table.

Mr McElhinney summarised the current work of Tourism Waitaki, and work carried out at the penguin colony.

Tourism numbers were ahead of the national average. The colony recently hosted the biannual penguin symposium, which attracted 100 people from around the country. Recent weather conditions had impacted the penguins due to murky seawater, but numbers were still increasing.

The organisation was well represented at TRENZ and they were in the process of recruiting staff.

Councillors asked questions about tourism numbers, new staff, and future direction. The Mayor thanked them for attending and for their work.

Omarama Airfield

Chairman Clive Geddes attended online and spoke about the work programme at the airfield.

Ground rents are going to be reviewed and lifted over the next three years. The goal was to collect enough money from the ground rent to cover the \$20,000 per annum loss.

The airfield planned a formal board meeting tomorrow. The Mayor acknowledged the work of he unpaid board members and thanked them for their work.

Whitestone Contracting

George Kelcher and Chief Executive Paul Bisset joined the table.

Mr Bisset read out a statement outlining the plans for the company as outlined in the Statement of Intent. There were no questions from councillors.

The Mayor noted that the social outcome requirements asked of Whitestone would be reflected in council's procurement policy, to put them on an equal footing with other contractors. He thanked them for attending.

RESOLVED WDC 2025/078

Moved: Cr Brent Cowles

Seconded: Cr Tim Blackler

That Council formally receives and notes the attached Final Statements of Intent 2025/2026 for its Council Controlled Organisations, namely Ōmarama Airfield Limited, Tourism Waitaki Limited and Whitestone Contracting Limited.

CARRIED

6 DECISION REPORTS

6.1 ASBESTOS CEMENT PIPE POLICY GUIDELINES

This report sought Council's adoption of the Asbestos Cement Pipe Policy Guidelines to support the implementation of the Asbestos Cement Pipe Policy.

Councillors asked questions and these were answered by staff.

The Mayor asked if more context could be included in reports so people reading the agenda could understand the background.

RESOLVED WDC 2025/079

Moved: Cr Jim Thomson

Seconded: Cr Courtney Linwood

That Council adopts the attached draft Asbestos Cement Pipe Policy Guidelines.

CARRIED

6.2 DECISION ON WAIHEMO RECREATION RESERVE GRAZING LICENCE

The purpose of this report was to determine whether a new grazing licence should be issued to the current licensee for all or part of the council-owned reserve.

Recreation Specialist Lindsay Hyde joined the table. There has been a mixed view from the community on this matter. Strong points have been raised regarding the availability of reserves to the public and there have been passionate views expressed on both sides of the argument.

Councillors asked questions about several issues including:

Whether Council would monitor the state of the reserve going forward. Yes, but staff were not as proactive in the more distant parts of the district.

Were the minutes of the hearing available. Yes and the chief executive was currently considering releasing the public excluded part of the minutes.

Formalising the route to the summit was a separate piece of work and not related to the grazing licence.

If there was a partial handover, how long would the tenure of the remaining grazing lease last? This would need to be negotiated.

If the trust did a good job and in five years was ready to take on more of the land, should today's council preclude that by offering a longer grazing lease for the rest of the land?

The Mayor said if the trust could show progress with part of the land, after maybe three years more can be taken from grazing and added to the rehabilitated part.

Discussion took place on whether the amount of money council received for the lease should remain public excluded.

Cr Hopkins was concerned about the costs of fencing and suggested the following motion.

MOTION

Moved: Cr Jim Hopkins

b) That the current licence to occupy be subject to confirmation of costs associated with reduction and agreed apportioning of those costs.

The motion was not seconded.

Lindsay Hyde said the relocation of the fence should be part of the resizing of the land. The grazer was responsible for ensuring their stock did not get out of their land.

Discussion took place on whether more details on fencing costs should come back to council. And who was responsible for fencing.

Cr Blackler suggested an amendment to resolution (c) as below and Cr Hopkins removed his initial motion.

Cr Hopkins said this was an opportunity for the trust to honour its commitment to succeed with a portion of the reserve, and its success would almost inevitably result in further opportunity.

The Mayor wished the trust well with the portion of the land that would be their responsibility and encouraged them to apply for biodiversity grants towards the cost of rehabilitation.

RESOLVED WDC 2025/080

Moved: Cr Tim Blackler

Seconded: Cr Jim Hopkins

That Council:

1. Accepts the recommendation of the Hearings Committee to allow as follows:

- a) That the progressive rehabilitation of the Puketapu/Waihemo Recreation Reserve, as proposed by the Waihemo Community Board, proceeds, and
- b) That the current grazing licence to occupy be reduced by approximately 20 hectares as agreed with the licensee to assist with the progressive rehabilitation of the reserve.
- c) That Council delegates to the Chief Executive the authority to negotiate and undertake necessary actions for the renegotiation of the licence to occupy, and renewal terms that allow sufficient notice for the lessee, but align with the eventual establishment of the entire reserve.

CARRIED

5.2 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The chief executive took the report as read and raised some of the highlights contained in the report.

Simon Neale, chairman of the Performance, Audit and Risk Committee, asked for a breakdown of full time, part time and casual staff. This will be emailed to councillors.

Cr Percival asked about an increase in staff numbers from the 2023-24 year to now. As the information wasn't immediately to hand, the Mayor asked him to put his question in writing so an accurate response could be given.

The Mayor asked for clarification on how management would be held to account. Further to that, he requested information on why the action to ensure that the Governance Team and Community Boards felt supported had been defined as being delivered in the 2025 calendar year rather than the original proposal. When adopted in September 2024 for the 2024/25 year KPIs, that KPI was intended to be carried out in the current financial year.

RESOLVED WDC 2025/081

Moved: Cr Tim Blackler

Seconded: Cr Rebecca Ryan

That the Chief Executive's Report be received.

CARRIED

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 3.14pm for a workshop on the Water Services Delivery Plan decision.

This workshop was livestreamed and is available on YouTube at -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ww5Bj7K_t4&pp=ygUYd2FpdGFraSBkaXN0cmliZCBjb3VuY2ls

The meeting reconvened at 5.21pm.

7 RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED WDC 2025/082

Moved: Cr Jeremy Holding

Seconded: Cr Jim Thomson

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

The general subject matter of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48 of

the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under section 48 for the passing of this resolution
8.1 - Strategic Land Purchase Proposal	s7(2)(h) - the withholding of the information is necessary to enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities	s48(1)(a)(i) - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7
8.2 - Public Excluded Recommendations of the Waihemo Community Board Meeting held on 12 May 2025	s7(2)(i) - the withholding of the information is necessary to enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)	s48(1)(a)(i) - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7
8.3 - Public Excluded minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 May 2025	s6(a) - the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial	s48(1)(a)(i) - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7
8.4 - Public Excluded minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24 September 2024	s6(a) - the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial	s48(1)(a)(i) - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7

CARRIED

8 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SECTION

9 RESOLUTION TO RETURN TO THE PUBLIC MEETING

RESOLVED WDC 2025/083

Moved: Member Jeremy Holding

Seconded: Member Jim Hopkins

That Council resumes in open meeting and decisions made in the public excluded session are confirmed and made public as and when required and considered.

CARRIED

10 MEETING CLOSE

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.24pm.

TO BE CONFIRMED at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 29 July 2025.

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CHAIRPERSON