

Tamahere-Woodlands Councillors' update March 2026

Join the new Community Voice Panel

Waikato District Council has established a Community Voice Panel and invites you to join it to help guide Council decisions. Panel members will receive short online surveys throughout the year on topics that matter to them such as parks, roading, new facilities, environmental initiatives, and future planning, with some opportunities to take part in-person. Panel feedback will help guide Council decisions and ensure communities have a direct voice in local planning and services. For more info, and to sign up for the Panel, go to: www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/community-voice-panel.

Public Forum at Council meetings

Residents and ratepayers also have a new opportunity to speak directly to the Council on matters important to them. Public Forums will be held at the start of the agenda of certain Council meetings and you can apply for speaking time. Speakers will be given 5 minutes and can attend in person or on-line. To apply for a speaking slot please go to the Council website and search for 'public forum'.

Waikato District Council retains AA+ credit rating

The Council has retained its AA+ (outlook negative) credit rating from Fitch Ratings following an annual review. It's the highest rating currently assigned by Fitch to NZ councils. The negative outlook reflects sector-wide uncertainty including reform and funding constraints. A high credit rating gives access to lower interest rates, easing pressure on rates.

Progress on establishing IAWAI

The Council has approved a draft Significance and Engagement Policy for the jointly-owned HCC and WDC Waters Council Controlled Organisation (establishing when consultation with customers must be triggered) which is largely based on the two Councils' own S&E policies. Staff are now working on the IAWAI Transfer Agreement under which the Councils' water assets are valued and transferred to the new CCO on 1 July. This agreement is expected to be brought to both Councils in March. Also on the timetable for review moving forward are a number of other policies that IAWAI will either need to establish, or that may be transferred or delegated to IAWAI. These include policies covering land acquisition, easements, development contributions, and rates and charges. Three Bylaws controlling water supply, stormwater and tradewaste and wastewater will also need to be reviewed by August this year before responsibility for administering these Bylaws is transferred to IAWAI.

Other Council decisions

- In a split decision the Council agreed to retain membership of LGNZ by a close margin. Cost of membership (\$65,854) plus event/training opportunities taken up totalled nearly \$80k in the 2025 calendar year. This was weighed against the value of policy analysis/advocacy, training (with opportunities for community boards), and networking with other councils.
- The Council has agreed to consult Tuakau residents on introducing rubbish bags or retaining the wheelie bins used for its rubbish service since it was part of the old Franklin District - provided the full cost is met through an increase in the targeted rate, but in a split vote the Council decided not to extend the consultation to Pookeno which has a rubbish bag service. The Council also agreed not to extend the consultation to the rest of the District (where rubbish bag services are in place) on the evidence of environmental and other costs, eg. residents using wheelie bins dispose of an extra 2.5kgs waste per week on average than residents using bags, and across the district this would amount to an extra 27 tonnes more landfill per week at an extra cost of nearly \$268,000 per year in landfill fees.

Works programmes

- Council's new roading contractors, Higgins in the north and Fulton Hogan in the south, have so far delivered 66.5km resealing of the 96.35km planned for this summer.
- TCC's opinion is sought on possible Tamahere Rd designs before planned road reconstruction next summer.
- The car park area leading to the Narrows boat ramp will be closed on Thursday 5 March to allow for minor drainage work to be completed.

Reserve planning

Following a meeting last week, a community steering group has been nominated to work with the Council on plans for redeveloping Matangi Recreation Reserve. It includes representatives from the Matangi-Hillcrest Sports Club, both Matangi and Tamahere community committees, and close neighbours of the reserve.

Fast track proposals in the Ward

- Waikato Thoroughbred Racing proposed facility Tamahere – WTR shared its plans with Tamahere neighbours last Wednesday (with Cr Keir, TCC chair and WDC staff in attendance). A further meeting is expected on 22 March.
- CDL Land NZ Ltd has a fast track project listed for a 211-ha residential and industrial hub in the Ruakura 2 (R2) growth cell bounded by Gordonton Rd and the Waikato Expressway. The proposal triggers consideration of a Council boundary agreement that would allow the HCC boundary to expand to include the development. Landowners in the area were invited to evening briefings in the Puketaha Hall last week (with Cr Beavis and WDC staff in attendance).

Contact your Tamahere-Woodlands Councillors:

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