



Community Services Bulletin

February 2024

Summer activities



January was an excellent month to run activities for the children in the Gore District. We had Storytime in the garden which was attended by 56 children. We also ran a very popular scavenger hunt in the Gore and Mataura library. We have also been enjoying our outdoor space and have the doors open with beanbags and seating for people to enjoy.



We recently received new tables to help fit out the library. One of them has become the puzzle table and is located by the entry to the library. We have been surprised by the number of people sitting enjoying this space. Puzzles are completed within two days of being placed out. We have also noticed people who do not know each other begin to chat. Such a simple activity enhances well-being and increases social engagement.



Reading Challenges conclude

The end of January saw all our reading challenges completed. We had a record 194 enrolled children with 117 children completing the challenge. Who read 1747 books. We also had 18 teenagers return their entry forms for their challenge. The adults also enjoyed their challenge and Matura Library outshone Gore with 23 adults returning their entries.

Games Night



Games night kicked off and our first session on a Wednesday night was well attended by both adults and families enjoying time together playing a range of board games which were brought with the NZLPP funding.

January library statistics

Door count

Total door count	2022-2023	2023-2024
July	7039	8231
August	7140	7680
September	6492	7141
October	6719	7287
November	6274	6970
December	5529	5212
January	1637	6974

*2023 Jan stats down because of moving library

Issues – (this does not include renewals)

Issues	2022-2023	2023-2024
July	7534	10801
August	7112	10012
September	6752	9404
October	6891	8589
November	6768	8250
December	9033	7265
January	1078	8680

*2023 Jan stats down because of moving library

WiFi connections

Wi-Fi Connections	2022-2023	2023-2024
July	1266	2138
August	1636	2325
September	1455	2251
October	1489	2380
November	1509	2314
December	1268	1912
January	1147	2152

*2023 Jan stats down because of moving library

Our computers

Computer usage	2022-2023	2023-2024
July	339	600
August	373	580
September	348	582
October	380	615
November	361	587

December	280	510
January	116	607

*2023 Jan stats down because of moving library

Signups

Signups	2022-2023	2023-2024
July	41	141
August	32	106
September	39	72
October	28	84
November	31	59
December	23	44
January	4	79

*2023 Jan stats down because of moving library

E-item issues

E-item issues	2022-2023	2023-2024
July	669	820
August	524	839
September	675	913
October	631	971
November	589	962
December	633	1085
January	731	1014

E-item issues covers our e-Audiobooks and eBook issues. Statistics show that our borrowers needs are changing and so is the way they consume material. January 2024 is up 39% on January 2023, with a 48% increase overall.

2. REPORT FROM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER (Keith McRobie)

Staff worked right through the Christmas and New Year holiday period keeping grass in check and main parks tidy.

The predicted dry weather pattern hasn't quite eventuated, and we have still been mowing throughout the district, although not at the same level as in spring. There is always a moratorium restriction from NZTA around the main highway mowing through Gore and Mataura.

Staffing wise we are now down to one vacancy for a machine operator/sprayer. In January, we employed a vegetation control operator and part of her newly defined role is to look after new areas and areas that we have not managed particularly well. This includes Matai Ridge, Pioneer Park, playground surrounds, dealing with basic CRMs and providing backup to the Cemetery Assistant.

Update on ongoing and future projects

Main Street tree replacement

This was delayed with the NZTA highway moratorium and then waiting for the asphalt contractor to get back to work. There was then an issue with a missing key component that connects the tree frames to the tree grates. We had to source a substitute connector bracket locally. Work was finally completed on the last day of January much to the delight of the retailers. Feedback to staff during the replanting was overwhelmingly positive.

Newman Park hedge line removal

A contractor was engaged in January to remove the line of conifers and poplars adjoining the hockey turf and pioneer rugby's main and junior fields. The trees had originally been kept in check but in recent years had spread outwards and upwards causing severe shade and root encroachment issues to the hockey turf.

The hockey turf had installed root guard around their junior turf however the tree roots had gone under and around this. Increased air movement will also help the main rugby fields at Newman Park as they are prone to retaining water in the middle of winter.

Tulloch Park Stage 2 development

The project team are still working on the final part of the project, being the supply and instal of the splash pad. One more splash pad supplier has been recommended to us and that has pushed the design concept stage out to the end of February. It is hoped that three priced design concepts will then be available for the project group to consider, seek alterations and finalise.

It is worth noting that all the suppliers are keen to work with local contractors where possible rather than bring staff from afar.

A&P Showgrounds irrigation

The new irrigation system is now fully commissioned and operating as designed. The demand for its use has been less than expected due to frequent rain and slightly cooler average temperatures. The pop-up irrigation system on the main arena will have its first real test when it is used for the equestrian events at the A&P show.

Community engagement

We have been actively engaging with various groups, clubs and organisations, including attending consultations, workshops and meetings. We have met with Active Southland and the Southland Spaces and Places Guidance Group.

3. REPORT FROM GORE VISITOR CENTRE (Sharon Cooper)

Summary for January

Visitor numbers over January were somewhat erratic with no noticeable pattern to the busy or quiet days. It was expected revenue numbers would be down on the previous month due to strong Christmas sales boosting December revenue. It is possible that this reflected school holidays with some domestic travellers being grandparents on childcare duties.

Revenue for January 2024 (GST inclusive) was up 37% on January 2023. A new range of NZ souvenirs and sourcing products that provide a good profit margin contributed to the increased sales revenue.

The Visitor Centre's success in recent months was the subject of an article in the Ensign.

The Intercity bus sale count was 19 for January, compared to 13 in December. This continues to be a valuable service for those who have difficulty with booking online or preferred not to.

Focus this month has been getting ready for Southern Field Days, working with Arts and Heritage Curator Jim Geddes and Senior Events Coordinator Jessica Swan to represent the Hokonui Moonshine Museum and our town with merchandise. As well as extending our 'Gore-gous' T-shirt range into hoodies, we launched a new range called 'Gore Blimey'. It's available in tees and hoodies.



Gore Visitor Centre	December 2023	January 2024
Number of sales	329	244
Items sold	831	533
Revenue (incl GST)	\$19,136	\$12,763
Revenue change %	Up 100% on same period 2022	Up 37% on same period 2024

4. REPORT FROM THE SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR (Bonnie Mager)

This month, the Comms team welcomed a new member, who took over the role of Digital Communications Specialist.

Their arrival was just in time to help with Long-Term Plan consultation preparations. Information about the upcoming Long Term Plan Consultation went out with rates invoices at the end of January, and we have started advertising on Let's Talk and our digital screens in the Gore Library and the main administration building.



Behind the scenes, the team has completed the Long Term Plan communication and engagement plan, and is creating collateral and booking spaces for our consultation caravan sessions. These sessions will be Councillor-facing, supported by the Comms team.


Updates have been made on the Proposed District Plan hub on Let's Talk, as the second submission round opened on 14 February. This was also advertised in the fortnightly ChinWag Noticeboard, in the Ensign.

As usual, content involving the parks team has attracted the most engagement (likes, comments and shares) on social media. The post about our Chatterbox seats has received the highest engagement rate so far this year with our first Southern Field Days post being a close second.

Gore District Council
Published by Bonnie Mager · 12 January · 🌐

Have you noticed our **Chatterbox seats** and wondered what they are all about? They were designed to give people a space to talk about mental health and show the power of a good banter.

Our parks play a key role in providing spaces to relax and connect with others so we couldn't think of a better spot to place them. We have one in the Gore Gardens and one by the War Memorial. ... [See more](#)



[See Insights and Ads](#) [Boost post](#)


👍❤️ 163 30 comments 11 shares

Gore District Council
Published by Bonnie Mager · Yesterday at 09:31 · 🌐

❤️ An awesome day for Gore today as we get to celebrate both Valentines Day and Field Days at the same time! 🥰

👉 Swing by our stall at site 201 to tell us what you LOVE about Gore (or pop it in the comments!), eat some corn on the cob and taste some Moonshine.

🌱 You can also take home our free seed packets to have a bit of our Parks in your backyard and chat with us about all things Council!



[See Insights and Ads](#) [Boost post](#)

👍❤️ Hokonui Breakfast with Kirstin Chittock and 127 others 11 comments 4 shares

Our Google search console data shows us what people who find us via Google are searching. The top search terms included Dolamore Park, Gore cemetery records, Gore pool and the Gore ice rink. This data helps us to know what pages should be featured most prominently on our homepage.



Google Search

How visitors find your site on Google



Most searched queries

1	gore district council	Avg. position: 1 Top 5 results	1,109 clicks
2	dolamore park	Avg. position: 1.8 Top 5 results	117 clicks
3	alive gore	Avg. position: 3.2 Top 5 results	109 clicks
4	gore cemetery records	Avg. position: 1 Top 5 results	106 clicks
5	gore swimming pool	Avg. position: 1.1 Top 5 results	100 clicks

In the last month, the pages that saw the most Google traffic were the homepage, rubbish collection pages and the aquatic centre page. This highlights to use the importance of our messaging around rubbish collection when the new year rolls over and how popular our aquatic centre and multisports complex is, especially in the summer.



Your most popular content

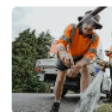
By clicks in the past 28 days



<https://www.goredc.govt.nz/>

Top Search queries: gore district council, gore council, goredc, gore dc

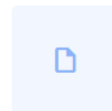
🔗 903



<https://www.goredc.govt.nz/services/waste-minimisation-collection/rubbish-collection-transfer-station>

Top Search queries: gore transfer station, rubbish collection gore, gore...

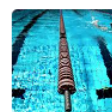
🔗 525



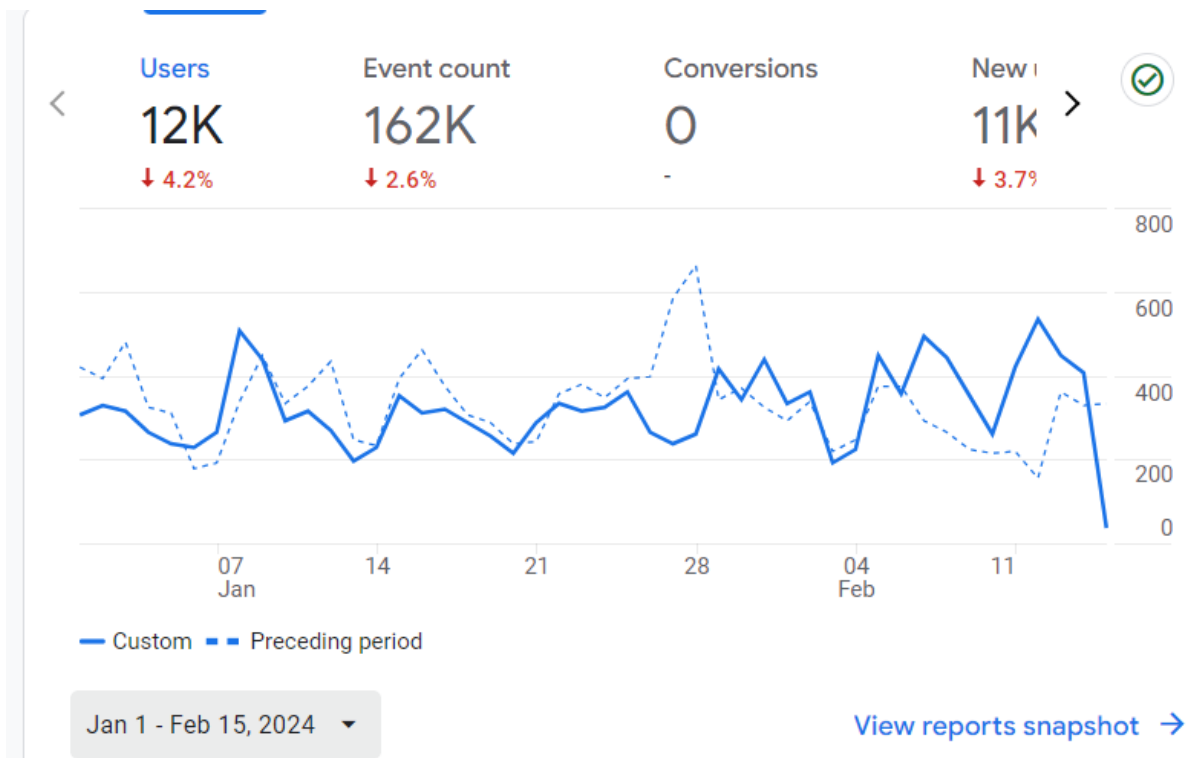
<https://www.goredc.govt.nz/our-places/gore-aquatic-centre>

Top Search queries: gore swimming pool, gore pool, gore multisports c...

🔗 516

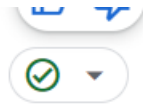


The Council website had 12,000 visitors between 1 January – 14 February 2024, with 162,000 event counts. (An event is a user's specific action on your site, such as clicking a button, playing a video or submitting a form.) These are both down from the previous time period, which is to be expected due to the summer break and the absence of a Digital Communications Specialist at that time.



The top visited page was the cemetery records page, followed by the home page, property search and rubbish collection page. This year, we are going to streamline and optimise the website. This data is helpful in letting us know where to begin, and again, to signify which pages should feature the most prominently on the home page.

Views by
Page title and scree...



PAGE TITLE AND S...		VIEWS
Cemetery Records S...	5.9K	↑34.0%
Gore District Council	4.8K	↓2.9%
Property Search - Go...	3.3K	↓4.0%
Rubbish Collection & ...	2.1K	↑37.5%
Agendas & Minutes -...	1.3K	↓4.2%
Gore Aquatic Centre ...	1.4K	↑59.8%
Amenities and Veget...	279	↓86.2%

5. REPORT FROM THE SENIOR EVENTS COORDINATOR (Jessica Swan)

Southern Field Days

The Gore District Council tent was a success at Southern Field Days, with various local, domestic and international visitors popping by for a chat.

The site focused on Hokonui Moonshine, 3 Waters and Parks and Reserves with tastings, games and giveaways. The free seed packets representing three of the District's parks proved popular, with a few people visiting specifically to get some to take home. The 3 Waters team received great support from their suppliers with free merchandise to give to people, which they did utilising a "guess the water" game that visitors seemed to really enjoy playing.

A total of 600 corn cob halves were barbecued and given away across the three days, and the idea was well received by the public, particularly vegetarian and vegan attendees. It was a point of difference as many other stallholders focused on meat products as their free snack.



On the Fly Matura River Festival

The special licence application submitted to have a beer garden element at On the Fly succeeded, and advertising for this is well underway. The event has also received sponsored products to give away as free prizes from B & B Sports, Category Three Fly Company, Manic Tackle, PGG and Kiwi Fly Fishing.

A new poster has been designed for this year's event, in preparation for a branding refresh in 2025. Since the event's focus has now been confirmed as community-orientated rather than purely a fly-fishing event, refreshing the look and feel of the branding will allow us to reaffirm the event's identity and build a solid foundation to use going forward.

Parks Week

'Tulloch Takeover!' Is the final format for this year's Parks Week event, with free face painting, pirate dress-up, free sausage sizzle, basketball and chalk art all happening at Tulloch Park from 11:00am – 2:00pm on Saturday 2 March.

The event will be supported by Active Southland with their Player (toy trailer), the YMCA with their activity trailer and by the South Island Fire Brigade competition which will also be held at Tulloch Park on that day.

With the support from these groups, the event is shaping up to be a fantastic, free, family day out with loads of different elements encouraging recreation, play and creativity.



Freeze Ya Bits Off Busking

Registrations are now live for Freeze Ya Bits Off Busking and the event has been advertised on Facebook through the corporate Gore District Council page, a Facebook event and the Freeze Ya Bits Off Busking page. The dates of the event are Friday 31 May – Sunday 2 June, with the finals to be held at the St James Theatre again following last year's positive response to the venue.

This year, busking auditions (excluding schools) will only be held on the Saturday in two time slots, rather than one time slot across Saturday and Sunday. This decision was made for a few reasons:

- It reduces conflict with Gold Guitar auditions by offering choice of time.
- It allows a sound rehearsal to be held on Sunday morning with the finalists.
- Last year, Saturday's buskers had significantly more attendees watching them and providing tips compared to Sunday's.
- The time slots of 10:00am – 12 noon and 12 noon – 2:00pm will keep town buzzing on the Saturday until the truck parade starts (assuming they proceed as usual).

A potential problem on the horizon is the Eastern Southland school principals have just decided to make Friday 31 May a teacher only day, which is the day we have dedicated to school busking auditions. We will still invite the schools as usual and if this date does not work for them, we can potentially move their auditions to Thursday

and advertise a change of date. The worst-case scenario would be cancelling the school auditions altogether, which we will aim to avoid.

3 DAY EVENT
The Coolest
BUSKING
Event in NZ!

FRIDAY 31 MAY - Schools Competition
High schools 11:00am - 12:00 noon
Primary schools 12:00 noon - 1:00pm

SATURDAY 1 JUNE - Busking Auditions
10:00am - 12 noon / 12 noon - 2:00pm

SUNDAY 2 JUNE - FINALS
4:00pm - 6:00pm at St James Theatre
Wrap yourself up warm, hit the streets and be
in to win great prizes!

**FREEZE YA BITS OFF
BUSKING**