





Mayor's message

I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you as we present the first issue of our community newsletter for 2024. This newsletter serves as a vital link between Council and residents, providing a platform for sharing information and community engagement.

In these pages, you'll find updates on important projects, news from our various teams and highlights of community events.

We understand the importance of maintaining our infrastructure and ensuring the safety and well-being of our residents, with ongoing efforts in flood recovery and road works upgrades as priorities in 2024. Additionally, I want to highlight the availability of our road grading calendar, now conveniently accessible on our website. This resource will assist in keeping you informed about scheduled maintenance and improvements to our roads.

COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE 2024

Residents and members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of Golden Plains Shire Council in 2024.

This year, Council Meetings will be held on the following Tuesdays, starting at 6pm: 27 February, 26 March, 23 April, 28 May, 25 June, 23 July, 27 August, 17 September, 22 October, 26 November and 17 December.

There will also be a Council Meeting (Budget Submissions) on 4 June and Council Elections held in October 2024.

In 2024, one Council Meeting will be held at the Linton Community Hub (26 March) while all other Council Meetings will be held at either the Golden Plains Civic Centre, 2 Pope Street, Bannockburn or The Well, 19 Heales Street, Smythesdale.

In other news, exciting developments are also underway, with kindergarten upgrades in Napoleons, Haddon and Bannockburn adding more than 120 new kinder places, as well as enhancements to the Lethbridge Play Space. These improvements reflect our commitment to providing quality facilities for our youngest community members to thrive and grow.

In response to the economic challenges currently facing the Local Government sector in Victoria, and recognising the burden of cost of living challenges on households, we are working on our 2024-2025 Council budget to ensure Golden Plains' financial sustainability. To navigate these challenges we're exploring new income sources, enhancing business efficiencies and exploring service level reductions. For more information, head to goldenplains.vic.gov.au/council/council-meetings/meeting-minutes

I also want to emphasise the importance of motorist and pedestrian awareness at school crossings. Let's prioritise the safety of our children as they travel to and from school each day.

As always, our community programs, including Community Strengthening Grants and Berrybank Wind Farm Grants will return in 2024 to support local initiatives and projects that benefit us all.

Cr Brett Cunningham
Mayor



All meetings of Council are livestreamed on Council's YouTube channel. For a direct link, visit Council's website or social media on the day of the meeting, with a recording available on Council's website following the meeting.

Any person can ask a maximum of two questions of Council during a 30-minute Question Time and all questions must be lodged by 10am on the day of the meeting by email, on Council's website or hand-delivered to Council's Customer Hubs. People can also ask their question virtually during a Council Meeting.

The meeting agenda is available on Council's website on the Friday prior to the meeting. For agendas and more information, visit: goldenplains.vic.gov.au/council/council-meetings

Road Works and Repairs in Golden Plains Shire

Council’s Roads and Drainage Teams have undertaken a number of significant road work projects on Council-managed roads across Golden Plains Shire in recent months.

These ongoing maintenance and repair projects show Council’s commitment to maintaining road condition and enhancing safety for all road users in Golden Plains Shire. A \$1.24 million project scheduled to commence in April is the reconstruction of the bridge crossing the Woody Yaloak River on the Linton-Piggoreet Road.

For more information about roads in Golden Plains Shire, visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au/resident/roads

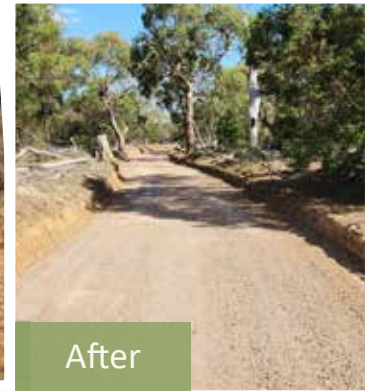
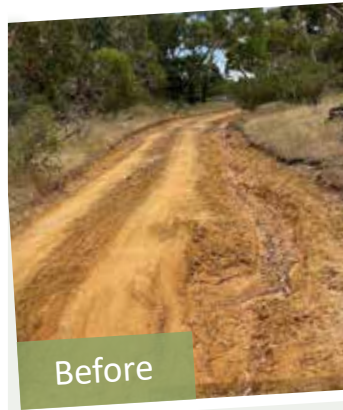


Linton-Piggoreet Road Bridge Reconstruction Preparation (shown above)

Work began in January to prepare for the bridge’s reconstruction following flood damage in October 2022.



Brady Road, Lethbridge, Drainage Improvement Works (shown above)



Bakers Lane, Teesdale, Flood Recovery Works (shown above)

Council Responds to Fire Emergency in Golden Plains Shire

On Tuesday 13 February, fires started across parts of western Victoria, including a significant fire that started in Staffordshire Reef.

Council officers spent the day at Incident Control Centres in Geelong and Ballarat, making calls and assisting with organising requests. Throughout the day and into the night, teams provided updates to the community, Council staff and Councillors. A relief centre led by Council staff opened that night as the fire was approaching some of the rural residential areas and the townships of Scarsdale and Smythesdale.



Over 45 residents took the opportunity to use the relief centre, before it was closed at 6am on Wednesday 14 February.

Council would like to thank staff, emergency services and community members who worked together to keep everyone safe during the fire crisis.

ADDITIONAL KINDERGARTEN SERVICES WELCOMED

The Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reform has provided access to additional funded kindergarten places in Napoleons, Haddon and Bannockburn.

Napoleons Kindergarten opened on the Napoleons Primary School site earlier this year, providing access to funded three-year-old and four-year-old kindergarten for the first time. Eureka Community Kindergarten Association (ECKA) is operating this service, which has been welcomed by local families and those in surrounding communities.

The new Haddon Kindergarten, on the site of the previous facility on Windermere-Haddon Road, features two new modular kindergarten buildings. These buildings ensure additional funded three-year-old and four-year-old kindergarten places, providing choice and local access for families. The site will also allow future planning for Maternal and Child Health Services. ECKA has been operating funded kindergarten programs in Haddon and will continue to operate from the new facility.



Bannockburn Family Services Centre will undergo a refurbishment which will include an extension providing direct access to a new two-room kindergarten modular facility at the rear of the site. This new facility is expected to be opened by April 2024 and will provide capacity for an additional 66 funded three-year-old and four-year-old places. Accessed by the Kardinia Early Learning Bannockburn service, the additional places will provide much needed immediate relief to families across the southern Golden Plains Shire communities.

These projects are fully funded by the Victorian Government, and are planned and implemented in collaboration with Golden Plains Shire Council and local service providers, and are the next step in the roll out of the State Government's Best Start, Best Life reform. This reform ensures access to quality Early Learning facilities and Funded Kindergarten services across Victoria and includes the gradual transition to 'Pre-Prep' which is an increase to a 30 hour- a-week program of play based learning from 2028 for four-year-old children across Golden Plains Shire by 2032.

Best Start, Best Life reform

For more information about these and other Best Start, Best Life Projects, visit

vic.gov.au/best-start-best-life-reforms

To learn more about kindergarten services in Golden Plains Shire, visit

goldenplains.vic.gov.au/resident/child-and-family



PARKGOERS IMPRESSED WITH LETHBRIDGE PLAY SPACE UPGRADE

Golden Plains Shire Mayor Cr Brett Cunningham visited Lethbridge Recreation Reserve to check out the \$400,000 Lethbridge Play Space Upgrade.

Stage One of the project included demolition of the old play space, site preparation for new play elements, installation of new equipment including slides, swings and see-saws and a wheelchair carousel. Edging, mulching and installation of a rubberised softfall was also completed. Additional works to install nature play elements, a shelter, BBQ and seating are scheduled to begin in March 2024.

Other Council infrastructure improvements to support and complement the Lethbridge Play Space Upgrade include car park upgrade works and footpath works along Russell Street. These are scheduled for delivery later in the 2023/24 Financial Year.

Council contributed \$200,000 towards this project with an additional \$200,000 from the State Government's Living Local Fund.



Community Award Winners Celebrate Achievements

Council extends its congratulations to the winners and nominees of the Golden Plains Shire Council Community Awards 2023.

The Golden Plains Shire Council (GPSC) Community Awards 2023 were presented at an event held at Haddon Community Learning Centre on Tuesday 23 January, where all award nominees were recognised and the 2023 winners announced.

The Golden Plains Shire Council Young Citizen of the Year 2023 was Caitlin Cadby of Cape Clear.

Council would also like to recognise Young Citizen of the Year 2023 nominee Paxton Turner of Batesford.

The Golden Plains Shire Council Senior Citizen of the Year 2023 was Rosslyn Bosnar of Bannockburn.

Council would also like to recognise Senior Citizen of the Year 2023 nominee Janet Pathe of Linton.

The Golden Plains Shire Council Community Impact Award 2023 was presented to Maddy McColl of the Meredith Tennis Club.

Council also recognises Community Impact Award 2023 nominees: Lethbridge and Bannockburn Scout Group, Ross Creek Landcare Group, Inverleigh Playgroup, Native Hut Branch of Country Women's Association, Bannockburn Bush Parkrun and Bannockburn Golf Club.



The Golden Plains Shire Council Citizen of the Year 2023 was Lin Hocking-Turnbull of Smythesdale.

The Citizen of the Year 2023 nominees were John Ten Hoopen, Robert Hill, Graham Turnbull, Mandy Humpage and Julie Buyel.

The annual GPSC Community Awards aim to encourage and acknowledge the valuable contributions and outstanding achievements made by individuals and groups in Golden Plains Shire.

For more information on the GPSC Community Awards, visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au/news



COUNCIL WELCOMES FUNDING FOR IMPROVED CONNECTIVITY IN ROKWOOD

Rokwood will benefit from improved mobile connectivity with the Federal Government announcing funding to establish a Macro Mobile site in the town.

As part of funding for Round 3 of the Regional Connectivity Program (RCP), the Federal Government has committed \$660,793 towards establishing a Macro Mobile site in Rokwood which will provide improved handheld coverage and capacity to the area.

During the process, Council facilitated a discussion between Telstra and Golden Plains Wind Farm developer TagEnergy who agreed to help fund the project.

This was key to the successful RCP bid. Council will now work with Telstra and TagEnergy to determine a site that will provide the maximum benefit for local businesses, residents and the Golden Plains Wind Farm workforce.

In total, the Federal Government is investing \$170.2 million to deliver 136 projects nationally, as part of its ongoing work to narrow the digital divide for rural, regional, and First Nations communities. For more information, visit infrastructure.gov.au/rcp



KEEPING OUR SCHOOL CROSSINGS SAFE

As the end of Term 1 of the school year approaches, Council would like to thank motorists and pedestrians for keeping school crossings safe in Golden Plains Shire.

Our school crossings have been very busy, with many children crossing the road on their way to and from school. Council's School Crossing Supervisors play a crucial role in the safety of the children using the region's school crossings. It is, however, also important that everyone walking and driving through school crossings is mindful of the road rules.

Motorists paying attention and following the road rules is central to the safety of the children using the crossings and to our School Crossing Supervisors. We also ask parents and carers to spend some time speaking to their children about rules at the school crossing.

It's also a good idea to remind children to not enter the school crossing if the School Crossing Supervisor has their face momentarily turned in a different direction. Remind your kids to always wait and make sure first that it's okay to start crossing.

Thank you for helping to keep both children and School Crossing Supervisors safe!



VANDALISM AT TURTLE BEND RECREATION RESERVE IN TEESDALE

Council has identified a spate of vandalism at Turtle Bend Recreation Reserve in Teesdale

We take great pride in our community and these actions are unacceptable. Council is actively pursuing any details connected to these incidents.

If you possess any relevant information or are aware of suspicious behaviour, please call Inverleigh Police Station on 5265 1211.



CAPE CLEAR, ILLABAROOK AND ROKWOOD JUNCTION COMMUNITY PLAN LAUNCHED

The Cape Clear, Illabarook and Rokewood Junction Community Plan (the Plan) was launched at the Cape Clear Valentine's Day Family Bush Dance.

Local Community Coordinators collaborated with mentors Non Profit Training (NPT) to craft the Plan as part of Golden Plains Shire Council's Community Planning program. Through surveys, interviews and public meetings, Coordinators engaged with residents to gather their insights and preferences, pinpointing top priority projects for their local community over the next four years to June 2027.

Priority projects included:

- Defibrillator access at Cape Clear Primary School.
- "Help a Neighbour Project" to strengthen community wellbeing.
- Environmental initiatives to tidy up weeds and hazards along roadsides and at Happy Valley Crossing.
- Expanded social events and improved camping facilities.
- And the establishment of a community garden near the recreation reserve.

Mannibadar has also recently launched its Community Plan, and neighbouring towns including Linton, Meredith, Bannockburn and Garibaldi are currently engaging with their communities through surveys. These towns will finalise their community plans in the coming months, before hosting launch events.

To learn more, visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au/community/community-planning



NEW FENCE AT LINTON POUND

In February, a new fence was installed at the Linton Pound, improving safety for both animals and the local community.

The new large cyclone fence is designed to prevent animals escaping and discourage thefts from the pound. This has created an area which is a lot safer for Council's impounded livestock.

ROAD GRADING CALENDAR



The annual road grading calendar is available through Council's online events calendar, helping residents to easily track when maintenance will be done on unsealed roads.

The annual Road Grading Program allows for grading of Council's unsealed road network in the Shire throughout the year. Council has committed to grading every road in the Shire's 714km unsealed Council road network at least once a year through its Unsealed Road Grading Maintenance Charter.

Residents can visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au/events to see when Council's graders will be in which areas of the Shire. They can either use the search box to view road grading listings in their individual town or click on the calendar to search month by month.

Community Grants Available in 2024

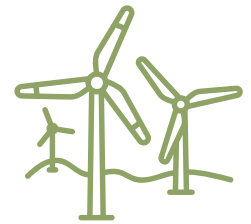
Council is pleased to announce that we are supporting the following community grants programs in 2024.

- **Berrybank Wind Farm Community Grants** will open on 1 May and close on 31 May 2024.
- **Community Strengthening Grants** will open on 1 August and close on 2 September 2024.

These funding opportunities provide a valuable source of financial support for local events, projects and programs in Golden Plains Shire.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their application with Council's Community Grants team. Please enquire as soon as possible to allow adequate time to discuss your application prior to the submission deadline.

For more information about grant programs, please visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au/community/grants or contact Council's Community Development & Grants Officer on 5220 7111 or email: communitygrants@gplains.vic.gov.au



ONLINE COMMUNITY DIRECTORY CONNECTS GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Council has launched a new and innovative Online Community Directory which provides easy-to-find information and assists residents and visitors in engaging with the many local community groups, clubs, services, associations and facilities based in the Shire.

The Online Community Directory features a range of categories and listings for people to search. Eligible groups can also add their own free listing by creating an account at Council's website. Once approved, groups can independently manage their own listings and update them as needed.

The Online Community Directory and a user guide with instructions on how to create a community listing are available at goldenplains.vic.gov.au/community-directory



MOVE YOUR WAY PROVING POPULAR

Council's free Move Your Way – Baby Steps Program (the Program) has proved popular with parents, caregivers and bubs.

The program runs until Friday 12 April 2024, and aims to overcome obstacles to physical activity by providing baby-friendly activities throughout the Shire for parents and caregivers, creating opportunities for movement and social connection.

Weekly activities led by local facilitators include Yoga, mat Pilates and baby sensory sessions with sessions available in Bannockburn, Meredith, Lethbridge and Smythesdale.

Childcare limitations and lack of time can make it difficult for parents and caregivers to find time to exercise, so a key focus of this program is baby friendly activities with local facilitators who have a passion for helping people move better and feel stronger.

Registration is essential. To register for the activities, visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au/events



**SHARE YOUR
THOUGHTS
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**

goldenplains.vic.gov.au



2040
COMMUNITY VISION



Making a Difference Through the Community Vision 2040 Refresh

Golden Plains Shire residents and visitors have been taking the opportunity to review Council's Community Vision 2040 to ensure we continue to work towards our community's goals.

Between 2019 and 2020, community members shared their thoughts and aspirations to create the Golden Plains Shire Community Vision 2040. The Community Vision 2040 identifies four priority areas: Community, Liveability, Prosperity, and Sustainability to be focused upon for the next 20 years.

Community members have been invited to help review this important strategic document through an extensive community engagement process from Monday 15 January to Friday 29 March 2024.

Community engagement activities include an online Have Your Say survey, meetings with key community groups, opportunities for residents and visitors to engage at local community events, including markets, and Community Engagement Workshops in Bannockburn, Smythesdale and Dereel.

Once the consultation is complete, Council will prepare a What We Heard report summarising the feedback provided by the community in mid-2024. Council will then prepare a draft updated Community Vision 2040 document which will be considered for endorsement by Council in September 2024. After November's Council election, the document will then assist the newly elected Council in preparing the next Council Plan.

Learn more at goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations

DARDEL DRIVE (BANNOCKBURN RECREATION RESERVE) UPDATE

In March 2021, Council decided that some of the land in the Bannockburn Recreation Precinct would not be needed for public open space, as originally planned.

Since that decision was made, Council prepared the necessary documents and plans and lodged an application to rezone the land to 'Neighbourhood Residential' and the application also included permission to subdivide the land into 51 lots.

In March 2023, the Minister for Planning commenced the public exhibition of the proposal to rezone the land. As part of the Planning Scheme Amendment process, the community was invited to make submissions. Residents were then provided with the opportunity to present their submissions to a Ministerial Panel. In December 2023, the Minister approved the rezoning and planning permit for a 51 lot residential subdivision.

You can view the latest fact sheet and provide your comments by visiting goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations



Council Engagement Program 2024

Golden Plains Shire Councillors have been actively engaging with the local communities across the Shire through the Council Engagement Program 2024.

Councillors have attended Listening Posts in Smythesdale and Bannockburn through February and March, to speak to residents about matters that are important to local people.

Council will begin its Budget Engagement Program in May 2024, with full details to be provided at goldenplains.vic.gov.au

The Councillor Engagement Program aligns strategically with Council's commitment to quality and open community engagement, reinforcing the relationship between Council and the community.



Autumn Holiday Program 2024

Open to all young people aged 12 to 25 years

Council is hosting a series of free activities for young people aged 12 to 25 years throughout the upcoming Autumn School Holidays, with fantastic activities running from Monday 1 April to Friday 12 April 2024.

Activities include a ghost tour at Geelong Gaol, a scooter/BMX workshop, as well as a trip to Melbourne to see the Titanic Exhibition

The free school holiday activities held across the Shire have been designed to support the needs and interests of young people, while also providing opportunities to learn new skills and connect with other young people.

To see a full schedule of available activities and to register, visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au/school-activity-program

COUNCIL WELCOMES FUNDING FOR MOORABOOL RIVER RESERVE

The Victorian Government has announced funding for the Moorabool River Reserve Riparian Restoration project through its Green Links Grant Program.

The Green Links Grant Program supports local projects along Victoria's urban waterways to deliver up to 300 hectares of revegetated land for communities to enjoy and wildlife to thrive.

Minister for Water Harriet Shing announced \$28,950 towards the Moorabool River Reserve Riparian Restoration project, which will include removing around 1200m² of introduced Dutch Elms and Box Privet within a 2500m² site, then revegetating the area with 1000 local indigenous plants.

The Victorian Government is investing \$10 million to deliver the grant program which follows the more than \$300 million invested over four years to improve the health of waterways and catchments across regional Victoria and Melbourne – building on a further \$224 million towards protecting regional waterways.

For more information on the Green Links Grants Program and future funding opportunities, visit water.vic.gov.au/grants/green-links-grants

JOIN THE
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
REGISTER



Join the Community Engagement Register to receive *Engage*, Council's monthly engagement e-newsletter.



Complete the simple web form at goldenplains.vic.gov.au/community-engagement-register



Email communityengagement@gplains.vic.gov.au



Become a Wiser Driver in 2024

The Community Inclusion team has been offered the opportunity to host another Wiser Driver class in April 2024.

Join us for an informative, informal and friendly refresher course, to upgrade your knowledge and build on your experience to keep you driving safely.

Topics include: how driving has changed over the years, changes to the Victorian road rules and staying roadworthy, how ageing can affect your driving, retaining our licenses and planning for the future.

During the course participants will also receive a free copy of the latest edition of 'VicRoads: Road To Solo Driving Handbook' which is the current book of Victorian Road Rules and a copy of the VicRoads Publication 'Ageing and Safe Driving - Am I Still Fit to Drive?'

The four consecutive sessions* will run on the below dates:

- Monday 8 April, 1 to 3pm.
- Monday 15 April, 1pm to 3pm.
- Monday 22 April, 1pm to 3pm.
- Monday 29 April, 1pm to 3pm.

Location: Bannockburn Family Services Centre

*Please note that all sessions must be attended in order to complete the program.

To register your interest, please contact Council's Social Connections Officer at ageingandinclusion@gplains.vic.gov.au or call our team on 5220 7151.



Escape the Heat

Escape the Heat was held for its second year running, hosted at both the Bannockburn Cultural Centre on 16 January and at The Well in Smythesdale on 23 January 2024.

Council's Bushfire Resilience Officer, Fiona Williamson, facilitated the session and discussed the usefulness of emergency apps that could be used to assist with contacting emergency services and providing exact coordinates when in need of assistance.

Attendees were also provided with several resources to take home and share with neighbours, friends and other community members. Participants were provided with some great new apps to download on their phones.



GET IN TOUCH

If you have any suggestions for future editions or comments you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact Council's Active Ageing and Inclusion Department on the following details:

Golden Plains Shire Council Active Ageing and Inclusion team (during business hours): 5220 7151

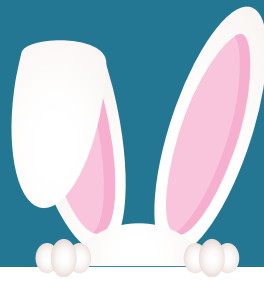
Email: ageingandinclusion@gplains.vic.gov.au

CUSTOMER HUBS

8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, Phone 5220 7111

Bannockburn
2 Pope Street, Bannockburn
Victoria, 3331.

Smythesdale
19 Heales Street, Smythesdale
Victoria, 3351.



EASTER IN GOLDEN PLAINS

Golden Plains Shire Council will have altered hours during the Easter Period.

Council's Customer Hubs and Council offices at Bannockburn and Smythesdale will close at 5pm, Thursday 28 March 2024, and will re-open at 8.30am on Tuesday 2 April 2024.

Essential services will be available in this period, in case of an emergency. If you need urgent assistance, please call 5220 7111 and follow the prompts.

For more information on holiday operations and services including Maternal and Child Health, please visit Council's website goldenplains.vic.gov.au

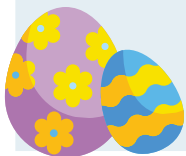
Rubbish and Recycling Collection

There are no changes to Council's waste and recycling collection over the Easter holiday period.

Please remember to place your bins out the night before your collection day.

Rokewood Transfer Station

The Rokewood Resource Recovery Centre will be closed on Sunday 31 March 2024. It will re-open for normal operational hours of 10am to 3pm on Sunday 7 April 2024.



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

P: 1300 363 036
P: 5220 7111 (24 Hours)

POSTAL ADDRESS

Golden Plains Shire Council
PO Box 111, Bannockburn,
Victoria 3331.

RATES PAYMENT

All Golden Plains Shire ratepayers will receive their 2024-25 Rates Notices in August.

There are three options for paying your Rates & Charges in 2024-25.

1. Pay in one full payment by 15 February 2025.
2. Pay in four instalments, due at the end of September, November, February and May.
3. Pay in 10 monthly direct debit payments, due on the 15th of the month from September 2024 to June 2025.

If those options aren't possible for you, we are happy to work out an arrangement that suits you better.

We appreciate that every rate payer has their own situation, and we can help. Call Council's Rates Team at 5220 7111 for a confidential conversation.



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