

Remote/virtual building inspections way of the future

Fifteen per cent of Council's building inspections are currently completed virtually using an app, saving time and money, and that figure is set to grow.

Building Control Group Manager Dhyanom Gala told last week's Environment and Planning Committee that virtual/remote inspections were the future of the building industry.

"We were one of the very early adopters of the BRANZ Artisan app and we now have 35 building firms using it," he said. "Since we started using it in 2021, 1,085 inspections have been completed, saving more than 32,000 kms and 1,000 man-hours."

The Government recently announced plans to make remote inspections the default approach for BCAs (Building Consent Authorities), an initiative expected to streamline the building consent system, reduce costs and improve efficiency.

While remote/virtual inspections were the future of the building industry, there were several challenges Mr Gala said.

The benefits were increased efficiency,

cost savings, flexibility, high-quality digital records, reduced health and safety risks as inspectors were not on site and continuity during emergency events (e.g. road closures).

Challenges included lack of liability sharing framework, resistance to change, staff training, technological requirements and maintaining consistency and quality control.

Mr Gala said Council's Building Control Group currently undertakes up to 5,000 inspections yearly and is continually exploring ways to promote efficiencies.

The Artisan app is recognising the quality assurance processes of building teams and fostering stronger connections between council and the building community.

The Building Control Group is gradually increasing its uptake of inspections carried out using the Artisan app.

"We will continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of remote/virtual inspections and make adjustments as needed to adapt to new challenges and regulatory challenges," Mr Gala said.



Building Control Group Manager Dhyanom Gala using the Artisan app to inspect a building

Blenheim's street tree planting programme

The 2024 winter street tree planting programme is almost complete.

Council has planted 130 trees this year in streets in Havelock, Renwick and Blenheim.

Some streets in the province are unable

to have trees due to narrow berms and the location of underground and overhead services.

Trees planted have gone onto the three year watering program which has 560 trees on it, to help get them established.



Council planted street trees in Rose Manor in full bloom

Are you ready to conquer Everest?

The Marlborough Mount Everest Challenge is underway, a run/walk event where the goal is to travel the elevation of Mount Everest (8,800m) in seven weeks.

Organised by Port Marlborough Pavilion with the support of Council, this year's annual event runs from 12 October to 30 November. Twenty per cent of all entry fees will be donated to the Picton Foodbank.

Pavilion Project Coordinator for Council Regan Russell said it took Sir Edmund Hillary seven weeks to climb Mount Everest in 1953. "This is a chance for locals to set their own challenge. We aim to encourage local people to not only use the amazing local walking tracks that Marlborough has to offer but to get fit while doing so," he said. "Attaining the goal of 8,800m during the seven week period will not be an easy task but we're sure Marlburians will be up to the challenge."

Participants can either run or walk the



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Tirohanga Track in Picton or the Mt Vernon Track in Blenheim. The Tirohanga Track will need to be climbed 36 times and Mt Vernon 25 times to complete the task.

"You can do it solo or as part of a team to help motivate each other. Get your family, friends and work colleagues to join your team. Put the challenge out there and see what you and your team can achieve," Mr Russell said.

Those who reach the goal of 8,800m as an individual or a group will receive a medal at a prize giving at the Pavilion on Saturday 7 December at 11am.

For more information and to register go to: www.everestchallenge.nz

Fire risk and erosion control trial

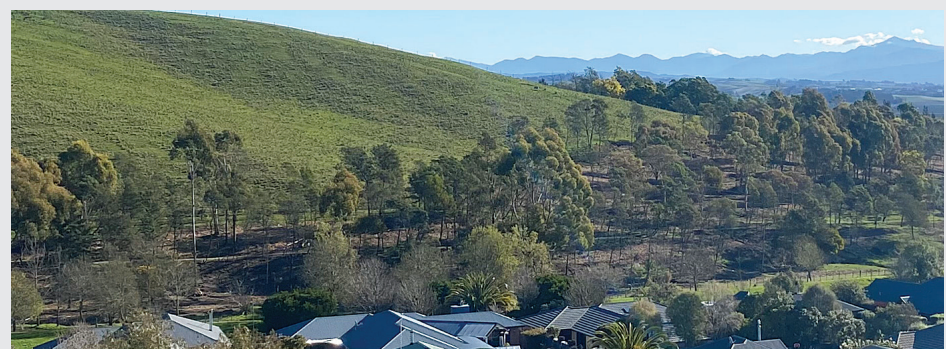
Walkers on the Wither Hills Farm Park will have noticed large-scale works under and around the trees on the lower slopes near walking tracks adjacent to Forest Park Drive.

A trial to reduce fire risk from excessive dry fuel loading has been underway through this tree block.

Previously the area had significant numbers of dead and dying trees as well as fallen branches which formed a significant risk during dry summer periods. Additionally, huge numbers of self-seeded wattles were stunting

and suffocating existing trees, which compromised the sustainability of the block and had resulted in large areas of bare, eroding soil.

Any useful lengths of firewood are being removed and donated to the Blenheim Lions Club for their firewood programme while the remaining brush was mulched into the soil to support existing trees. While the area looks a little bare, grass is starting to emerge under the remaining tree canopy and the area should look mostly recovered by the end of November.



The area along Forest Park Drive where a trial is underway to reduce fire risk

So far there has been an overwhelming positive response from local residents and park users.

A comprehensive report on trial results will be done in the spring when the trial finishes.

Opening Hours

Mon to Fri: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm
Closed Wed 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm
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