



New Geraldine Ward Councillor Philip Harper says he is ready to represent the Geraldine community. PHOTO: Supplied

Community connections key for Geraldine's new councillor

After growing up and farming for 40 years in the Arundel-Carew area, Philip Harper and his wife Jenny have recently made Geraldine their home. Philip was last week elected as the new Geraldine Ward Councillor at Timaru District Council.

In his online bio, Philip says, "I enjoyed playing rugby and cricket here in the 80s and 90s, and now I want to give back to the community. I'm proud to be part of the Geraldine Lions Club and am ready to represent Geraldine, our community, at the council level."

GNews sat down with the area's new representative to learn more about him.

GN: Congratulations. Your life will have changed since receiving the call.

PH: It certainly has. It's humbling to have the support, and I'm looking forward to the adventure.

GN: What made you want to represent the

Geraldine ward?

PH: I've got time and energy, and I'm enthusiastic about this area of the South Island.

GN: What are your first priorities for making a positive impact on the ward?

PH: Getting right onto every issue. I need to research and talk to people. I want to know every detail, everybody and everything. One priority is to have a once-a-month open-to-the-public meet-and-greet at the library meeting room. It'll be available for everyone individually or as a group. And I want to encourage the abundance of volunteers here and thank them ...

GN: At the district level, what initiatives or new directions would you like the Timaru District Council to take?

PH: There must be five major issues that are coming in the next three years that, in my view, need to be fully considered. Some things

may be able to be changed back. Some might have to be delayed. They include debt levels of the council, and full consideration of the static population growth and wanting to grab hold of initiatives to grow the economy and lifestyle.

GN: To what extent does the council have a role in advocating to central government?

PH: We've got an obligatory role to deal with central government. It's open-ended. There's got to be complete cooperation between the two. We've got two excellent MPs [Miles Anderson and James Meager], and they're not in opposition; they can get things done. I will bang on about the upper Ōrari bridge to anyone who wants to listen, and I'll keep going about it.

GN: Specifically, what impact would you like to have on:

1. Water services delivery?

PH: I haven't got my feet under the table

enough to comment.

2. Rural roads?

PH: It's a perennial problem. I'm open and willing to do what I can. Let me know if you've got any issues. Early warning signs are better than potholes.

3. The environment?

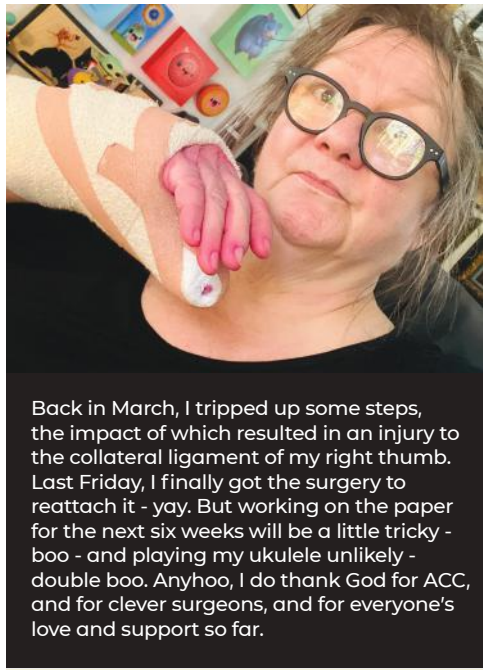
PH: I have an environmental bent. It's got to be considered with every decision. I have real sympathies with preserving the last of the last. We've got to work with landowners, encouraging partnership with landowners if it's freehold land.

4. Geraldine Town Hall/Cinema?

PH: We like the thought of it, the idea, the independence, the existence of it. The cinema is well worth looking after. ...

Contact Geraldine Ward Councillor Philip Harper on 027 267 3921. **JAN FINLAYSON**

gnews^f
EDITORIAL



Back in March, I tripped up some steps, the impact of which resulted in an injury to the collateral ligament of my right thumb. Last Friday, I finally got the surgery to reattach it - yay. But working on the paper for the next six weeks will be a little tricky - boo - and playing my ukulele unlikely - double boo. Anyhoo, I do thank God for ACC, and for clever surgeons, and for everyone's love and support so far.

Community spirit in full bloom

Geraldine's sense of community is shining brightly this spring. From council chambers to church halls and playgroup lawns, locals continue to show what makes this town special - connection, collaboration, and care.

New Geraldine Ward Councillor Philip Harper is already emphasising community connections as key to his role, recognising that progress happens when people work together. That same spirit is evident at St Andrew's Church's Light Party, where hundreds of children and their whānau gather every Halloween for an evening of fun, laughter, and light-hearted celebration.

Meanwhile, Pleasant Valley Playgroup marks more than 40 years of providing a nurturing space for families - a remarkable legacy built on friendship and continuity. Down by the Village Inn, a new rhododendron planting has taken root thanks to a real team effort involving several local organisations, adding more colour to the Sculpture Trail.

And with the Harvourts Geraldine Festival just three weeks away, the Geraldine Historical Society is calling for donations for its annual White Elephant and Plant fundraiser - funds that keep the much-loved museum preserve our town's stories for generations to come.

Together, these moments remind us that community isn't just something we talk about - it's something we grow, share, and celebrate. **xxx FI**

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AUDREY HEPBURN

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Children enjoying the bouncy castle at last year's Light Party at St Andrew's. PHOTO: Jan Finlayson

Family fun shines at St Andrew's Light Party

Everyone's invited to St Andrew's Church's 31 October Light Party. The annual shindig is "an alternative for Halloween; it's a fun community event," says minister Alistair McNaughton.

He says, "It's a huge free event. It's been vastly popular, with hundreds of kids. There are two large bouncy castles, and there are barbecues, chips and drinks, free games and activities, and music." As well as the main early-evening party, there's a mid-afternoon preschoolers' session, "a relatively quieter space for the little ones."

Fancy dress is welcome, albeit not the scary kind. Indeed, its take on the festival goes further, albeit unintentionally. Heading into a southern hemisphere summer, the Light Party's setting is counter to the northern celebration's dimming skies. The celebration of Halloween, All Hallows Eve, succeeded the Gaelic *Samhain*, which started around 2,000 years ago. *Samhain*, celebrating harvest and observing winter's onset, was said, also, to allow the dead and the living to meet.

In the end, Alistair says, the Light Party's

kaupapa is simple. "It's a gift to the community." He says, "It's very positive, and it's widely supported."

The Light Party is in the St Andrew's Church grounds, 5pm-7.30pm, Friday, 31 October. Preschooler's event 2pm- 3pm. All welcome; no cost. Enabled with support of businesses and funding from the Timaru District Council. Check the Light Party Geraldine Facebook page for updates and for wet-weather cancellation. JAN FINLAYSON

Richard Bolton brings seasonal Geraldine to life



Richard Bolton's upcoming exhibition at McAtamney Gallery showcases Geraldine through the changing seasons, all captured in watercolour.

Richard paints familiar scenes throughout the year, from Talbot Street's autumn colours to winter snow on the Four Peaks. "I just paint through the seasons and you see the changes," he says.

Working exclusively in watercolour demands intense focus. "You're never fully in control," Richard says. "With watercolour, from the very first brush stroke, the paper's expensive and you can ruin a piece with that first stroke. So the whole process of painting is very intense. When you're painting, you can't answer the phone. The time passes very quickly. It's so absorbing."

His approach to landscape painting developed in the United Kingdom, where he lived near Cambridge and painted the flat Fenland scenes. "That was what I was used to painting," he says. "So coming over here to paint mountains was a little bit new."

Richard deliberately avoids obvious compositions. "My landscapes are usually not the usual views that people expect. I get a kick out of presenting things a little bit differently," he says.

Richard Bolton's The Seasons in Watercolour opens at McAtamney Gallery on Saturday, 25 October, 11am-2pm. Also featured from 6 November is Jane McIntosh: Central Strength.

QUYÊN TRẦN

Richard with one of his Talbot Street watercolours. PHOTO: Supplied



"It's a really good support system ...," says committee member Kirby Goad, as Pleasant Valley Playgroup celebrates 40-plus-years. PHOTOS: Supplied

Four decades of community at Pleasant Valley Playgroup

Pleasant Valley Playgroup is celebrating more than 40 years of providing a nurturing community space for local families. The 1 November event will feature a face painter, bouncy castle, barbecue, games, and activities, along with something special to commemorate the playgroup's enduring legacy.

The playgroup was established in the early 1970s when local mothers chose the former Pleasant Valley School building as their meeting place. What started as an informal gathering became official in around 1984 when the Ministry of Education came on board.

Committee member Annelies Bray says, "The objective [of the event] is to celebrate Pleasant Valley Playgroup operating for over 40 years and

to appreciate everyone's efforts in running the group before us; their efforts have made it continue to be available for us to go."

"Each committee adds a little bit more to how the playgroup runs and operates, and then it gets handed on to others who want to add something else," she says.

The playgroup currently serves approximately 30 children aged from zero to six years, and welcomes parents, caregivers, grandparents, and extended family members. The group meets regularly and organises excursions to local attractions, including the library, fire station, farms, and museums.

The playgroup has created lasting connections across generations, with some members now

bringing their own children along to the same playgroup they attended as kids.

"It's a really good support system and a way to actually meet other parents and know that you're doing a good job and that your kid is actually normal," says committee member Kirby Goad. "We've made some really good friends."

Pleasant Valley Playgroup is funded by the Ministry of Education with a membership fee of \$20 per term or \$5 for casual visits, with the first couple of visits free.

The free 40-plus-year celebration is on Saturday, 1 November, 10am-2pm, 55 School Road, Pleasant Valley. Follow Pleasant Valley Playgroup on Facebook for more information, or see ad back page. QUYN TRẦN

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Temuka-Geraldine Rotary Club committee member Ingrid Bolt helping to plant the new rhododendron-based garden between the Village Inn and the Waihi River. PHOTO: Jan Finlayson



Crickey, doesn't Spring keep you on your toes between seemingly incessant nor'westers, chilly starts, the promise of warmer days that don't eventuate and then finally the sun does come out and I'm not wearing sunscreen. Sometimes it's not about winning, but we can all celebrate the extension of daylight hours.

This month, I had the pleasure of being involved in a Geraldine Sculpture Trail beautification project, a new garden behind the Village Inn. Turnbull Earthmoving and Shingle Supplies donated preparation of the ground and top soil, CORDE donated the mulch, and Ken Jordan Nursery supplied the rhododendrons, which the Geraldine Licensing Trust donated. Temuka-Geraldine Rotary donated nine Michelia trees and provided labour, along with a fantastic crew from the Waihi River Trails Volunteer Group. Their valuable expertise in placement and planting is hugely appreciated.

For a collaboration of six businesses/organisations, we couldn't have had a better team - thank you, everyone. I am sure you will enjoy the garden as it continues to grow for the benefit of this community, and enhance the experience for visitors to our town.

As always, ROSIE 027 222 7663.

Team effort blooms behind the Village Inn

A new rhododendron-based planting on Geraldine Licensing Trust land behind the Village Inn was installed recently, thanks to collaboration between the trust and six other local organisations.

"It's a Geraldine Sculpture Trail project," says trail coordinator Rosie Woods. "It's part of the beautification of the area, part of [landscape architects] Glasson Huxtable's masterplan for

the trail. It's going to connect the Rhododendron Dell with the rest of the sculpture trail."

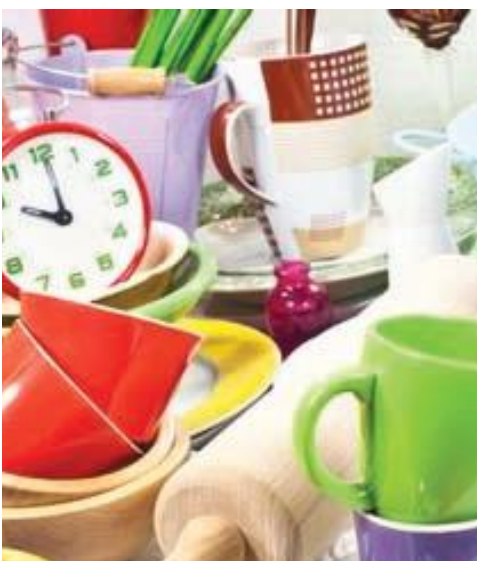
Ken Jordan, co-owner of Jordan's Nursery, says, "We're planting them in groups of five and three; a point of difference. Some are species rhododendrons for being compact and for foliage, and some are hybrids to add a bit more colour."

Rosie says, "They're low-growing to allow view shafts for art that will be placed in future." Fifty-two rhododendrons have been planted, along with nine low-growing Michelia trees."

Learn more about the Geraldine Sculpture Trail visit geraldinesculpturetrail.nz.

JAN FINLAYSON

gnews IN BRIEF



Donations sought for museum fundraiser

The Geraldine Historical Society is seeking goods donations for its annual White Elephant and Plant fundraiser on 14 and 15 November during the Harcourts Geraldine Festival.

"Anything small is welcome," says society secretary Margaret Chapman. "China, jewellery, picture frames, pictures, kitchenware, garden equipment, jigsaw puzzles and children's games if they're complete, ornaments, cutlery, tablecloths." Plants are long-time favourite items in the white elephant mix. Margaret says, "We'd like donations of plants; they've got to be potted, and they need to be named." She says, "The fundraiser is to keep the

museum open and running seven days a week - our costs, like everyone's, are increasing every year - so locals and visitors can come in and enjoy it and find out more about the history of the local area."

Deliver White Elephant and plant items before the event to Geraldine Museum at 5 Cox Street, 10am-3pm Monday-Friday. Phone 03 6937028. No clothes, electrical goods, or large items, please. The Geraldine Historical Society's White Elephant and Plant fundraiser is at Geraldine Museum 9am-4pm Friday 14 November and Saturday 15 November. JAN FINLAYSON PHOTO: Shutterstock

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gnewsRESULTS

GERALDINE BRIDGE CLUB Valley Handicap Pairs, 16.10.25 North South: 1st: K Miles & J Meijer 62.34%, 2nd: B White & L Reilly 55.34%. East West: 1st: M Shierlaw & R Pitelen 58.02%, 2nd: L Sherratt & R Hobbs 55.56%.
15.10.25 North South: 1st: John Kelly & L Pincombe 64.58%, 2nd: D Harrison & P Topham 60.83%, 3rd: M Bray & R Hobbs 51.25%. East West: 1st: L Johnston & D Johnston 59.17%, 2nd: M Shierlaw & S Harris 54.17%, 3rd: R Scott & M Thatcher 50.42%.

GERALDINE DISTRICT GOLF CLUB 18.10.25 Ellesmere Interclub Stableford: J Alan (ELLSMR) 41 PTS (WOF), D Law 40, B Auld 39, C Holland 39, M Taylor (ELLSMR) 38, T Kerr 38, T Gibson (ELLSMR), L Meaney 38, Phillips C. **16.10.25 Twilight Stableford:** C Watkins 19 PTS (WOF), S Worner 18, M Boon 18, M Christian 18, S Morrison 18.
15.10.25 Mixed Stableford: M Amos 46 PTS (WOF), B Martin 42, D Law 41, J Muff 41, D Holland 40, T Kerr 39, B Waller 39, B Pearsall 39. **14.10.25 9H Reserve Day Stableford:** B Bendsen 18, K Tilley 12. **Captain VS Vice Captain Match Play:** F Grant 69 NET, J Gallichan 74, M Gregan 75, A Ulrich 76.

GRANDE VUE GOLF CLUB 19.10.25 Stroke Round In windy conditions there was one outstanding score, Brendon Millar 73-14-59, 1st by 9 shots, 2nd M O'Malley 86-18-68 by lot G A Patrick 89-21-68, T Kerr 82-14-68, Sally Millar 94-24-70, Carol Seaton 94-23-71, B Aitken 94-23-71, D Law 85-14-71, J Rate 90-18-72, J Muff 84-12-72, A Muff 87-14-73, G Patrick 84-10-74, A Cox 97-22-75, G Marshall 87-12-75, R Stevenson 98-22-76, B Auld 99-21-78, G Oliver 94-16-78. Twos M O'Malley #11 N.Pin J Rate #2

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GABBY'S DOLLHOUSE: THE MOVIE
(G)
FRIDAY 1:30PM (FINAL)

Harry Lawtey (Industry) plays a young Richard Burton, a poor son of a miner who'd become one of the greatest actors of his generation with the help of an unlikely mentor. Co-stars screen greats Toby Jones and Lesley Manville.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - UK
MR. BURTON
(M) ADULT THEMES
SUNDAY 12:30PM (FINAL)

Emmy-winning director Jay Roach (Trumbo) pairs Olivia Colman with fellow Oscar veteran Benedict Cumberbatch for this adaptation of Warren Adler's novel The War of the Roses.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - UK/USA
THE ROSES
(R16) CRUELTY, DRUG USE, SEXUAL MATERIAL & OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE
SATURDAY 5:30PM (FINAL)

When a young girl's sketchbook falls into a strange pond, her drawings come to life - unpredictable, chaotic, and dangerously real.

ANGEL STUDIOS
SKETCH
(PG) VIOLENCE & COARSE LANGUAGE
FRIDAY 3:30PM (FINAL)

In this sequel to the 2022 DreamWorks animated heist comedy, The Bad Guys are now good guys... who are forced to become bad guys again. Based on the New York Times best-selling book series by Australian author Aaron Blabey.

THE BAD GUYS 2
(PG) VIOLENCE & COARSE LANGUAGE
SATURDAY 1PM (FINAL)

The third and (presumably?) final feature film in the Downton Abbey series following the Emmy-winning show, the 2019 movie, and 2022's Downton Abbey: A New Era.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - UK/USA
DOWNTON ABBEY: THE GRAND FINALE
(PG) COARSE LANGUAGE & SEXUAL REFERENCES
SUNDAY 6PM (FINAL)

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