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Council or bust for community board stalwart





COMMUNITY FOCUS: Long time Whakatāne-Ōhope Community Board Member Carolyn Hamill with dog Jack. Photo Troy Baker E5499-09

Diane McCarthy

Nine years on the Whakatāne-Ōhope Community Board is enough for Carolyn Hamill.

As she sets her sights on a seat on council at this year's local body elections, she says she will not be putting herself forward for the community board a fourth time.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed my time on the community board, engaging with people and projects in all parts of the community," she said. "But there are complex

issues facing our district that need wise decision-making.”

With three terms on the board and holding the chairwoman role for the past three years, she feels she has “cut her teeth”. She missed out on a seat on the council at the 2022 election by just 76 votes.

“I don’t come with a particular agenda. I believe we need people around the council table who represent all parts of our community and that includes more women and younger people.

“We have big issues facing our district, with water infrastructure upgrade, growth, climate resilience and increasing rates.

“We need balanced and outcome-focused decisions, with a good dollop of efficiency and common sense. I believe I will bring these to the table.”

Having lived in Whakatāne for 15 years, raising a family with husband Keith, Mrs Hamill has thrown herself into the community wherever possible.


“I’ve got a strong sense of civic duty ... and I love seeing good outcomes for our town.”

She is a trustee on the Bike Whakatāne Trust, which advocates for safer cycling and improved cycle networks, and is chairwoman of the MTB Working Party which has been working towards establishing mountain bike trails within the district.

She is also passionate about waste reduction and the environment and demonstrates this through regular volunteering with Waste Zero Whakatāne, Waste Not Want Not and the Apanui Saltmarsh Care Group. She can also be seen

helping with junior sports at the Whakatāne Tennis Club and Whakatāne Hockey Club.

She sees running for council as a natural extension of her community work.



“I care for our district and I want to see thriving communities for all peoples – and this means making difficult, thoughtful, future-focused decisions within a constrained council budget. These decisions are never black and white. Good decision-making relies on balancing competing priorities for the benefit of all.”

She believes her work as a part-time vet at Veterinary Health Centre gives her plenty of practice making “pragmatic, evidence-based decisions”.

“I have a solid understanding of local government through Community Board work, and through my time on the National Community Boards Executive

Committee. We've been advocating for community boards to be harnessed and supported to be a more effective tool for better local decision-making."

She is also a qualified Hearings Commissioner and sits on RMA Hearings as a Community Representative through Whakatāne District Council.

She encourages people to get out and vote at the upcoming local body elections.

"Make sure that the people who are elected to council are the people you want to be there."



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