



Compiled Date	28/04/2023
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## LGOIMA

When releasing responses to previous LGOIMA requests, names and contact details of individual requestors will be withheld to protect their privacy.

Information requested by the media, lobby groups, public sector organisations and MPs will always be published, while information specific to an individual or their property will not generally be published.

<b>Request from:</b>	Joanne Naish – Stuff.co.nz
<b>Information requested:</b>	Correspondence between Mayor Helen Lash and Steven Gillet regarding his role as deputy mayor
<b>Response by:</b>	Simon Bastion, Chief Executive

28 April 2023

Joanne Naish  
Stuff.co.nz

Via Email: [joanne.naish@stuff.co.nz](mailto:joanne.naish@stuff.co.nz)

Dear Joanne

**Official information request for correspondence between Mayor Helen Lash and Steven Gillet regarding his role as deputy mayor**

I refer to your official information request dated 28 March for correspondence between Mayor Helen Lash and Steven Gillet regarding his role as deputy mayor.

The information you have requested is enclosed.

Some information has been redacted under section 7(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

Some information has been redacted as it falls outside the scope of the original request.

There is no charge in supplying this information to you.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

**Council has adopted a Proactive Release Policy and accordingly may publish LGOIMA responses on the Council Website at <https://www.westlanddc.govt.nz/lgoima-responses>.**

The collection and use of personal information by the Westland District Council is regulated by the Privacy Act 2020. Westland District Council's Privacy Statement is available on our website [here](#)

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Mary-anne Bell, Business Analyst at [LGOIMA@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:LGOIMA@westlanddc.govt.nz), 03 756 9091.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

**Simon Bastion** | Chief Executive

SB/MB

**Archived:** Thursday, 27 April 2023 1:11:55 pm  
**From:** [Steven Gillett](#)  
**Mail received time:** Mon, 27 Mar 2023 20:15:00  
**Sent:** Mon, 27 Mar 2023 20:14:55  
**To:** [Helen Lash](#)  
**Subject:** FW: 20230327\_Deputy Mayor stepping down  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Sensitivity:** None

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I'd also like to see a revised copy of this statement before it is ready for release.

Thanks

**Steven Gillett** | Councillor Hokitika Ward – Deputy Mayor  
**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** Steven Gillett <[cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:13:35 AM  
**To:** Helen Lash <[mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: 20230327\_Deputy Mayor stepping down

Hi Helen

Thanks for sending your media statement through to me. In its current form, it really isn't acceptable to me as it doesn't include the reasons for my resignation. These are clearly outlined in my resignation letter and need to be included in this media statement.

Can you also let me know who is being sent this media statement?

Best regards,

**Steven Gillett** | Councillor Hokitika Ward – Deputy Mayor  
**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** [Helen Lash](#)

**Sent:** Monday, 27 March 2023 4:40 pm

**To:** [Steven Gillett](#)

**Subject:** 20230327\_Deputy Mayor stepping down

Hi Steven.

Attached is the media release re your stepping down as Deputy. Please have a read and let me know if you are happy with the content. I would like to get this out tomorrow by late morning so if you can come back to me before then, it would be appreciated.

Many thanks



Kindest Regards,

Helen Lash

**Helen Lash** | Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [027 242 7484](tel:0272427484) |  [mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**Archived:** Thursday, 27 April 2023 1:12:10 pm

**From:** [Steven Gillett](#)

**Mail received time:** Fri, 28 Oct 2022 00:53:53

**Sent:** Fri, 28 Oct 2022 00:53:44

**To:** [Helen Lash](#)

**Subject:** FW: Candidate Information

**Importance:** Normal

**Sensitivity:** None

**Attachments:**

[lge2022-westlanddc-candidate-handbook-updated.pdf](#);

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FYI – see page 7 where it lists remuneration and it does actually state that no car is provided. I did see something somewhere where there was a car allowance included – if I find it again and it's relevant I'll let you know.

Cheers,

**Steven Gillett** | Deputy Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** Steven Gillett <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Friday, 28 October 2022 1:34 PM

**To:** Steven Gillett <[cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** Candidate Information

This email is from an external sender. Be careful when opening any links or attachments. If you are unsure, please contact IT for assistance.

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

**Archived:** Thursday, 27 April 2023 12:39:32 pm  
**From:** [Helen Lash](#)  
**Mail received time:** Tue, 28 Mar 2023 00:22:45  
**Sent:** Tue, 28 Mar 2023 00:22:40  
**To:** [Steven Gillett](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 20230327\_Deputy Mayor stepping down  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Sensitivity:** None

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Hi Steven

That wasn't the intention at all and I'm sorry you think that way.

I haven't bought into the agenda of anyone and am disappointed that you have thrown that at me. The role of a deputy mayor is to work closely with the mayor, to take the lead on some of the issues and concerns that arise, to work with the wider community groups as well as stand in for the mayor in the mayors' absence.

The fact you put a lot of time into reading reports pre meetings is commendable but has no relevance to the role of deputy mayor – it's what everyone is expected to do.

The fulfilment of your role as my deputy [REDACTED]. I need a deputy that communicates with me, that works with me, that is out there meeting with community groups and that I can share an element of the workload with. By being active out in the wider community and with the many community groups, workload content becomes part of that. I don't see these requirements as being over the top and if fulfilled, would sit in alignment with the remuneration that sits with the position. I must be able to quantify input versus remuneration in that position as I do with my own.

We obviously have a difference in interpretation of the Deputy's role and how it works. I would have liked to have had the opportunity to work with you on improving the difference that is obviously there regarding the role of Deputy but that is not what you want.

To that end, I thank you for your time and communications on this issue and look forward to working with you as we move forwards as a council.

Kindest regards,

**Helen Lash** | Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini** | Westland District Council

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7342

📞 027 242 7484 | ✉ [mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** Steven Gillett <[cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 11:23 AM

**To:** Helen Lash <[mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** RE: 20230327\_Deputy Mayor stepping down

Thanks, Helen. It's obvious that you are wanting to create the impression that I resigned because I didn't want to continue in this role rather than include the full reasoning. Also, the idea that releasing it would cause disharmony amongst the team doesn't make sense to me. There is disharmony because it was clear that you had bought into the agenda from a group of

other councillors who questioned my contribution and worth in the deputy mayor role. I believe explaining why I had to resign would actually improve the tone within the council and hopefully stop this petty stuff once and for all. I did not want to resign but had no choice as you created an environment where my role would all be about the hours I engaged with community groups and how often I sat in the desk at council with no recognition given to the actual real work I had been doing so far. I am far more prepared and engage more actively at council meetings because I spend a lot of time preparing for the real issues that are important. The issue of my hours and performance plus my commitment to the role to justify the \$60k remuneration I found very offensive. This seems to have come to a head as a result of my absence during Feb/Mar. This was a period of absence that I discussed with you well in advance soon after the election and got your agreement to do so. I feel that I have been let down and not supported by you during that period and you allowed yourself to be brought into inaccurate rhetoric and speculation during that period as to my commitment to the role even though I allowed a full day to zoom to the Feb council meeting plus also attended the council zoom briefing on the 27/2.

I have put in my resignation letter the reasons why I have resigned and you have accepted that. The facts are there is a reason I took this decision and you are trying to change the narrative as to why I felt I had to resign. I stand my decision and the reasons why and expect that to be understood and communicated. The people who voted for me also need an explanation as to the decision I have made.

I'd also note that at the end of the museum workshop on the 22/3, you communicated to all councillors that you had an expectation that they should all attend the online briefing from Takiwa Poutini. I note that at that meeting, I was the only representative from WDC – there were 3 from Buller and 2 from Grey. My commitment to my role at council is without question in my view.

I am travelling to Hokitika and won't be back until this evening where I intend to be present at the Heritage Hokitika meeting.

Best regards,

**Steven Gillett** | Councillor Hokitika Ward – Deputy Mayor  
**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** [Helen Lash](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 March 2023 9:51 am

**To:** [Steven Gillett](#)

**Subject:** RE: 20230327\_Deputy Mayor stepping down

Hi Steven

Many thanks for coming back to me. My reasoning for the wording is based around the need for us all to continue to work together in a healthy positive environment. To include all your wording would I think potentially undermine that moving forwards and has the potential to create a rift in the team which is not what I want to see. If you would like me to share your resignation letter with the rest of the councillors, I am happy to do so but again, I feel it could potentially lead to a rift or a situation I am not keen to see or be a part of.

**Helen Lash** | Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini | Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 027 242 7484 |  [mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** Steven Gillett <[cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:15 AM

**To:** Helen Lash <[mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** FW: 20230327\_Deputy Mayor stepping down

I'd also like to see a revised copy of this statement before it is ready for release.

Thanks

**Steven Gillett** | Councillor Hokitika Ward – Deputy Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini | Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** Steven Gillett <[cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:13:35 AM

**To:** Helen Lash <[mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** RE: 20230327\_Deputy Mayor stepping down

Hi Helen

Thanks for sending your media statement through to me. In its current form, it really isn't acceptable to me as it doesn't include the reasons for my resignation. These are clearly outlined in my resignation letter and need to be included in this media statement.

Can you also let me know who is being sent this media statement?

Best regards,

**Steven Gillett** | Councillor Hokitika Ward – Deputy Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini | Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**Archived:** Thursday, 27 April 2023 1:12:26 pm

**From:** [Steven Gillett](#)

**Mail received time:** Fri, 24 Mar 2023 03:22:11

**Sent:** Fri, 24 Mar 2023 03:22:05

**To:** [Helen Lash](#)

**Cc:** [Simon Bastion](#)

**Subject:** RE: Deputy Mayor

**Importance:** Normal

**Sensitivity:** None

Hi Helen

That's fine with.

Best regards,

**Steven Gillett** | Councillor Hokitika Ward – Deputy Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** [Helen Lash](#)

**Sent:** Friday, 24 March 2023 2:45 pm

**To:** [Steven Gillett](#)

**Cc:** [Simon Bastion](#)

**Subject:** RE: Deputy Mayor

Hi Steven.

Thank you for your email.

I would like to take the weekend to consider your tender of resignation and will respond back to you on Monday.

I hope this is acceptable to you.

With regards,

**Helen Lash** | Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 027 242 7484 |  [mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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24<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Dear Helen

I am tendering my resignation as deputy mayor as I no longer have the confidence and support from you to continue in this role.

During the election campaign, it was clear that we shared a lot of common concerns about the big issues that the council would be facing mostly as a result of what the previous council and mayor have created but also the new challenges that needed to be addressed. When you asked me to be your deputy, I saw this as a great opportunity to work together to quickly start working through these issues. My role as I saw it was to continue to represent and advocate for the large number of people in the community who voted me but to also support you in your role so that I could take some work away from you but more importantly support you with my complete loyalty and backing. At no stage was the remuneration for this role of any concern to me nor the workload – it would be as required and I indicated I had the ability to take on extra work.

The situation has now obviously changed and the issue of my remuneration is once again on the table. I cannot continue to work in this role being dictated to by yourself and a group of other councillors as to what roles, hours and duties I perform to justify this remuneration as if I were an employee which I am not. I am not accountable to the other councillors who sit around the table – I'm only accountable to the people who voted me into council to support, represent and advocate to be their councillor in the Hokitika Ward and I intend to continue to do so for the rest of this triennium.

Yours sincerely



Steven Gillett

**Archived:** Thursday, 27 April 2023 12:39:48 pm  
**From:** [Helen Lash](#)  
**Mail received time:** Mon, 27 Mar 2023 01:36:02  
**Sent:** Mon, 27 Mar 2023 01:35:57  
**To:** [Steven Gillett](#)  
**Cc:** [Simon Bastion](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Deputy Mayor  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Sensitivity:** None

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Hi Steven.

Thank you for giving me the time to consider your resignation as deputy Mayor.

This letter is to confirm my acceptance of your resignation as of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Emma will draw a press release up to which I will forward to you for your approval before releasing to the media.

I thank you for your time spent in the role as Deputy.

Kindest regards,

**Helen Lash** | Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 027 242 7484 |  [mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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**From:** Steven Gillett <[cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Sent:** Friday, March 24, 2023 2:07 PM

**To:** Helen Lash <[mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor.lash@westlanddc.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** Deputy Mayor

Hi Helen

Letter attached for your consideration

Best regards,

**Steven Gillett** | Councillor Hokitika Ward – Deputy Mayor

**Te Kahui o Poutini** | **Westland District Council**

36 Weld Street, Private Bag 704, Hokitika 7842 |   

 [cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:cr.gillett@westlanddc.govt.nz)

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