



Responsible Freedom Camping Workshop Notes

WORKSHOP HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 36 WELD STREET, HOKITIKA AND VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2024, COMMENCING AT 2 PM

The purpose of the workshop is primarily to provide information and discussion and will not make any decisions or pass any resolutions.

The workshop was live-streamed and made available on the Council's YouTube channel.

The following documents have been circulated to Elected Members:

- Statement of Proposal
- Draft Responsible Freedom Camping Bylaw 2024
- Freedom Camping Act Section 11 Assessment
- Freedom Camping Bylaw 2018

1. MEMBERS PRESENT AND APOLOGIES

Facilitator: Her Worship the Mayor		
Members	Deputy Mayor Cassin	Cr Phelps
	Cr Baird	Cr Burden
	Cr Davidson	Cr Gillett
	Cr Neale	
Council Staff	S. Baxendale, Acting Chief Executive	L. Crichton, Group Manager Corporate Services and Risk Assurance
	E. Bencich, Acting Group Manager District Assets	D. Maitland, Executive Assistant
	E. Rae, Strategy and Communications Advisor (via Zoom)	Kate Baird, Asset Management Officer
	Alicia Paulsen, Asset Strategy and Development Manager	V. Morris, Compliance Team Leader Regulatory
Also in Attendance	Sam Strong, Recreation and Open Spaces Planner, Thrive Spaces and Places (part of the meeting)	Geoff Canham, Principal Parks and Recreation Specialist from Thrive Spaces and Places (part of the meeting)

NGĀ WHAKAPAAHA APOLOGIES

Cr Manera, Kw Madgwick, Kw Tumahai.

Absent

Nil

2. WORKSHOP ITEMS

The Acting Group Manager District Assets and the Asset Strategy and Development Manager introduced the Powerpoint and advised the purpose of the workshop as follows:

- To review Council's obligations.
- To review the proposed enforcement options.
- Consultant Question and Answer Session.
- To discuss and agree on restricted and prohibited areas.

The Freedom Camping Act 2011 permits freedom camping in any local authority area unless it is restricted or prohibited by a local bylaw or any other enactment.

The Act does not recognise that some areas under the control or management of Council may not be suitable for freedom camping.

A bylaw can identify where freedom camping is prohibited and restricted.

In accordance with the Act, areas may only be prohibited or restricted for the following reasons:

1. To protect the area.
2. To protect the health and safety of people who may visit the area.
3. To protect access to the area.

All areas must be assessed against the three criteria before any restrictions or prohibitions are applied to ensure the bylaw is appropriate, proportionate, consistent and defensible.

As part of the bylaw-making process, there is a one-month consultation via a special consultative procedure where organisations and people can submit on the proposal.

From 7 June 2025, there will be changes in the self-containment rules, which will mean that all vehicles will need to be certified with a green warrant to be certified self-contained under the new requirements.

Council staff have used the Local Government New Zealand Freedom Camping Bylaw and Guidance to create the proposed bylaw.

Freedom Camping Statistics were provided, each camper on average spends \$150.00 per day, and they travel across multiple districts.

Enforcement Options including the cost, positives and negatives were provided.

Sam Strong, Recreation and Open Spaces Planner, and Geoff Canham, Principal Parks and Recreation Specialist from Thrive Spaces and Places attended the meeting to talk about what other Councils are doing in their district, how freedom camping friendly they have made their district, and the key things that Council needs to think about in making a bylaw and answer any questions that Councillors may have. Thrive Spaces and Places is a specialist parks and recreation consultancy focusing on strategic and management solutions, project and programme management, planning, assessments and evidence work for agencies and communities.

Topics discussed included who the campers are, the spectrum of tourists that come to Westland, types of vehicles freedom campers are driving, and by not having a bylaw that facilitates some agreeance to some freedom camping, campers can camp within 200 metres of any accessway, roadway or riverway, if they are self-contained.

The Asset Strategy and Development Manager then talked about the site assessments that had been undertaken. Council staff undertook a desktop assessment of all Council-owned reserves, community halls and public toilet sites, as well as previously known freedom camping sites. As a result of the shortlist selected sites were then selected to undertake a field assessment.

Key considerations were then discussed.

Area	Locations Included in Proposed Bylaw
Kumara Domain	Included for consultation.
Arahura Historic Bridge Site	Self-contained vehicles only A cultural check is required.
Hokitika Beachfront	Included for consultation. Public toilet opening hours from 8.00 am to 7.00 pm.
Cass Square	Remove
Sunset Point	Included for consultation. Public toilet opening hours from 8.00 am to 7.00 pm.
Milltown Shelter	A cultural check is required.
Woodstock Domain	Included for consultation.
South Spit Road, Takutai	Not included.
Ross Hall	Community Association do not support.
Kakapotahi Beach Carpark	Included for consultation.
Harihari Hall	Community Association do not support.
Franz Josef Heliport	Self-contained vehicles only.
Bruce Bay	Cultural Site, not included.
Paringa	Included
Haast	Included

Deputy Mayor Cassin left the workshop at 3.00 pm and did not return.

The next steps in the process were then outlined as follows:

Date	Item
24 October 2024	Bylaw and Statement of Proposal approved for consultation at the next Council meeting.
25 October to 25 November 2024	Public Consultation
9 December 2024	Public Freedom Camping Bylaw Hearing
17 December 2024	Adoption of the Bylaw at the December Council Meeting

Staff will undertake a review of all current signage.

The workshop closed at 4.00 pm