

Christchurch City Council
MINUTES ATTACHMENTS

Date: Wednesday 21 January 2026
Time: 9.32 am
Venue: Camellia Chambers, Civic Offices,
53 Hereford Street, Christchurch

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Request for a Canada Goose Management Strategy

1. **Christchurch City Council - Public Meeting:** 26 January 2026

Presenting: Danette Wereta

2. Purpose

- a. As concerned residents and ratepayers of Canterbury, we are requesting that Christchurch City Council develop and adopt a Canada Goose Management Strategy, with a focus on upstream, preventative, and non-lethal interventions, and with clear evidence, monitoring, and transparency.
- b. The objective is to ensure that wildlife management decisions are ethical, effective, and represent good stewardship of ratepayer funds, while reducing reliance on recurring annual culls.
- c. Each year we kill geese at significant cost, yet we lack a clear problem statement: what precise harm is being addressed, what outcomes the killing is meant to achieve, and whether it is effective compared with humane alternatives. Continuing this approach without defined objectives or evaluation is like repeatedly treating symptoms without diagnosing the cause, exactly why other countries have adopted geese management strategies and why Canterbury urgently needs one too.

3. Key concerns

- a. Inefficient use of ratepayer funds
 - i. Recurring annual culls are expensive and labour-intensive, yet there is no clear evidence they are helpful. Continuing a costly intervention without evaluation risks poor value for money.
- b. Problem misidentification
 - i. Much of the concern appears to relate to goose droppings. This is a management and design issue, not a justification for lethal control. Comparable nuisances (e.g. dog waste) are addressed through infrastructure, education, and enforcement, not killing.
- c. Absence of an integrated strategy
 - i. Culling appears to be the primary tool used, rather than one option within a broader, evidence-based framework. Internationally, councils use integrated goose management strategies that significantly reduce the need for lethal control.



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4. Background

5. 2025 Canada Goose Cull

- a. In 2025, Christchurch City Council culled 356 Canada geese at a reported cost of up to \$20,000, involving approximately 26 staff.
- b. The stated justification was that removing juveniles would reduce the population in the medium term.
- c. However, there is no publicly available data demonstrating whether this outcome has been achieved, nor how success is defined or measured.
- d. Lack of transparency and evaluation.
- e. The cull proceeded without independent public observation.
- f. There is no accessible reporting on:
 - i. baseline population size,
 - ii. population trends over time,
 - iii. thresholds for intervention,
 - iv. or long-term effectiveness of repeated culling.

6. Without these elements, it is not possible to assess whether culling represents a proportionate or effective response.

7. Key findings from University of Canterbury research (New Brighton)

- a. Recent field research conducted by the University of Canterbury (GEOG309, 2025) in the Avon River red zone, New Brighton, provides important context:
 - i. The average observed population in the study area was approximately 70 geese.
 - ii. Goose activity and droppings were highly localised, clustering in specific areas and on one riverbank rather than being widespread.
 - iii. Field observations recorded limited droppings on pathways and minimal a disturbance to the public during the study period.
 - iv. Nutrient impacts from droppings were found to be context-dependent, with most nutrients settling into sediments rather than immediately degrading water quality.
 - v. The researchers explicitly note that impacts vary by site and that blanket approaches are not appropriate.
 - vi. The report highlights the absence of a city-wide population estimate, making it impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of current cull rates.
8. Importantly, the authors do not argue that geese should be unmanaged. Instead, they call for:
 - a. better population monitoring,
 - b. site-specific responses,
 - c. public engagement,
 - d. and transparent decision-making.

9. What we are asking of Councillors

10. We respectfully request that Christchurch City Council:
 - a. Develop a formal Canada Goose Management Strategy, informed by evidence and best practice (look at how it's successful overseas).
 - b. Clearly define the problems being addressed and the thresholds for intervention



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- c. Establish population monitoring and performance measures
- d. Prioritise non-lethal, preventative measures
- e. Report transparently to councillors and the public on outcomes and costs

11. Why this matters

- 12. Geese are highly intelligent, social animals who form long-term pair bonds and often mate for life. They are devoted parents, raising their young as family units, and are known to remain with injured or vulnerable flock members rather than abandoning them. These are not disposable animals, but sentient beings with complex social lives and strong family bonds.
- 13. Continuing to kill geese year after year (already killed on farms because geese compete with agricultural production and impose costs on farmers) fails to address the real issue. This approach ignores our responsibility to provide safe, well-managed urban environments where people and wildlife can coexist, reducing pressure on rural land in the first place. Other countries have successfully implemented humane, non-lethal geese management strategies in urban and peri-urban settings, demonstrating that effective alternatives exist. There is no credible reason Canterbury cannot do the same.
- 14. If Canterbury is serious about being a region that values biodiversity, animal welfare, and responsible stewardship of public spaces, we must move away from routine killing and toward creating safe, well-managed environments where people and wildlife can coexist. Humane, evidence-based management is not only possible, it is the ethical and sustainable path forward.



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Fireworks at New Brighton: Ban requested

Christchurch City Council - Public Meeting: 26 January 2026

Presenting: Danette Wereta

Re: [Community Board Submission – Fireworks and Environmental Harm at New Brighton - Google Docs](#)

I raised concerns about the New Brighton fireworks display with the Community Board and received a response that failed to address the real and demonstrated environmental impacts of holding fireworks on a coastal site. Following that, I was invited to speak at a Council public meeting.

New Brighton Beach is a tidal ecosystem, not an event space. The tide does not wait for a scheduled clean-up, and wildlife does not wait for operational timelines. Rubbish left on the sand, even briefly, is washed into the ocean and ingested by animals.

The suggestion that complaints are only valid if rubbish remains after clean-up is completed fundamentally misunderstands how coastal environments work. By the time clean-up occurs, harm may already have happened. In this case, it had. I personally removed several bags of rubbish from the beach myself. It was not removed by Council staff, and so much had already entered the sea.

Statements that staff cannot clean the beach in the dark effectively acknowledge that the site is unsuitable for this type of event. If an event cannot be cleaned quickly enough to prevent environmental harm, it should not be held in that location.

Expressions of sympathy for animal owners and environmental concerns are not mitigation. Reducing shell size does not change the core issue: fireworks involve explosive noise, debris, and chemical residue released directly into a wildlife habitat. Harm is inherent to the activity at this site.

Responsibility for preventing environmental damage sits with the organiser, not the public. Regardless of individual behaviour, waste must be contained and removed before it can enter a tidal system. That did not happen.



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Christchurch actively celebrates and protects birdlife along the Avon–Heathcote estuary near the New Brighton Bridge. Allowing fireworks at the adjacent coast, including from the pier, directly contradicts those values.

For these reasons, I am calling for a ban on fireworks displays at the coast, including the New Brighton Pier.



Appendix:

1. Response from CCC

Below is also advice that has been shared with the Community Board:

Firstly, thanks to the board for providing some positive feedback. A huge amount of work and planning goes into bringing this event to Brighton.

I would also just like to note to the board that the person making the complaints about the waste management has gone out and taken photos early morning, prior to the littler picking team starting work. If there were any photos taken of rubbish remaining after the clean-up was completed, then those complaints would be valid. The waste management plan was the same as last year, which we felt had worked successfully.

We added extra bins on the night and had a clean-up team working throughout the event. I also coordinated with the CCC waste team and Parks to have all the public bins emptied, they did a great job getting this completed by 9am on Sunday.

We can't have staff cleaning the beach in the dark after the event, with no visibility. It's unfortunate that people are careless and litter. We can try and add more messaging to the public around this.



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The traffic flow and road closures will always be an issue with staging large events in this area. We did a lot of preplanning to try and refine the traffic management this year and Fulton Hogan did a fantastic job. We mitigated the closure breaches that occurred last year and managed to get the roads opened earlier than anticipated after the event.

We sympathise with animal owners and environmentalists. I requested this year that the pyrotechnics company do not use their largest shells which produce the most amount of noise to try and reduce the volume.

Regarding the music choice, the theme changes each year so will take those comments on board for next time. Good idea to feature some kiwi artists.

2. Media Coverage:

[Concerns raised over New Brighton beach clean-up after fireworks - Chris Lynch Media](#)



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Community Board Submission: Fireworks and Environmental Harm at New Brighton [Winter Fireworks Spectacular : Christchurch City Council](#)

Submitted by: Danette Wereta

Date: 11 August 2025

Executive Summary

Hosting fireworks displays at New Brighton's coastal environment causes environmental damage, wildlife harm, and animal distress. This submission presents evidence-based arguments for transitioning to sustainable celebration alternatives that protect our marine ecosystem and community wellbeing.

1. Fireworks and Pollution: The wrong place for explosives

Hosting a fireworks display at the ocean's edge in New Brighton, a habitat for marine birds, fish, and fragile ecosystems, results in preventable environmental damage.

Fireworks emit toxic heavy metals including barium, strontium, aluminium, and copper, used to create colours. These can contaminate sand, groundwater, and marine systems. Even a one-off event releases chemicals and micro-debris that do not disappear, they either stay in the environment or are swept into the sea with the tide.

Studies show that fireworks cause spikes in air and water pollution, including fine particulate matter (PM2.5), perchlorates, and nitrogen oxides, all of which are harmful. Perchlorates interfere with thyroid function in both animals and humans and can contaminate rivers, lakes, and drinking water.

Supporting Research

- [Exploring the Environmental Impact of Fireworks | Earth.Org](#)
- [Are July 4th Fireworks Bad For the Environment? | TIME](#)
- [The Environmental Impact of Fireworks: Celebrations and Consequences - Environment+Energy Leader](#)
- [Environmental impacts of perchlorate with special reference to fireworks—a review | Environmental Monitoring and Assessment](#)
- [Effects of fireworks on particulate matter concentration in a narrow valley: the case of the Medellín metropolitan area - PMC](#)

2. Litter, Tides and Wildlife Harm: A mismanaged coastal event

There was no organised overnight clean-up. By morning, the tide had already begun sweeping debris into the sea, including foil, wrappers, plastics and other waste. I filled four large rubbish bags, and wildlife was already feeding on the mess. This has been the same every year. Even a well-managed event cannot control the ocean. High tide reaches the event zone. That

means clean-up must happen immediately after fireworks end, not the next day.

We worry about plastic straws, yet we are littering directly into the sea. Scientists have opened the stomachs of whales and seabirds and found them full of plastics, and we are showing that we are directly contributing to this horror with this event on the beach.

I observed black-backed gulls eating extreme amounts of litter. Native birds such as shags, oystercatchers, terns, and godwits live along the estuary and river mouth.

While it is not nesting season, birds still experience fright responses that waste critical energy during winter and interrupt feeding.

Fireworks displays on beaches can breach the protective intent of the Wildlife Act 1953, Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978, and Fisheries Act 1996 by disturbing legally protected species such as seabirds and marine mammals, many of which are also listed as threatened under the New Zealand Threat Classification System and the IUCN Red List.

Supporting Research

- [Some Ways Fireworks Impact Animals and People - The New York Times](#) • [‘Terrible’ discovery of little blue penguin’s stomach contents | The Press](#) • [Short-term bang of fireworks has long-term impact on wildlife: study | Curtin University](#) • [CSIRO PUBLISHING | Pacific Conservation Biology](#)
- [Why Are Fireworks Harmful To Wild Animals And What Can Replace Them? - Faunalytics](#)
- [Fireworks have long-lasting effects on wild birds](#)
- [Probert-et-al.-2024.-Case-study-assessing-the-short-term-impacts-of-fireworks-on-marine-species.pdf](#)

3. Companion Animals: Fireworks cause harm and fear

Each fireworks season, companion animals in our communities experience stress and trauma. They suffer panic, injuries, flight responses, and long-term behavioural issues. Many are lost, and some never fully recover.

In a UK study, 62 percent of dogs showed signs of distress during fireworks. In Aotearoa, the SPCA receives a spike in reports of frightened or missing pets after fireworks displays. The public concern is real.

The Animates petition, with over 90,000 signatures, shows a clear public mandate. Most people with animals do not want fireworks. We used to think they were fun. But we also used to allow smoking in cars with children. When we know better, we must do better.

Supporting Research

- [Fireworks disturbance across bird communities - Hoekstra - 2024 - Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment - Wiley Online Library](#)
- [Fireworks frighten pets — Companion Animals New Zealand](#)
- [Fireworks safety | New Zealand Veterinary Association](#)
- [Nightmare season: Protect your pets from fireworks fright | Stuff](#)
- [Fireworks](#)
- [NZVA Joins Petition To Ban Public Fireworks Sales And Encourages Animal Owners To Plan Ahead For 5 November | Scoop News](#)
- [Fireworks Are Frightening to Pets - FOUR PAWS International - Animal Welfare Organisation](#)

Closing Statement

This is not a matter of opinion, it is a matter of responsibility. Hosting fireworks on an ecologically sensitive coastline is a decision that carries legal, environmental, and ethical consequences.

It undermines our obligations. It sends debris into the ocean, poisons habitats with heavy metals and perchlorates, and distresses animals, both wild and domestic, for the sake of momentary spectacle. This is entirely preventable.

We are no longer in the dark about the harms of fireworks. The science is clear. The alternatives are available.

Leadership now means choosing celebration that honours the wellbeing of people, animals, and place. Anything less is a failure of duty.

We must stop holding fireworks displays on our coastline, and to commit to environmentally and ethically responsible public events.