

Reference Number: 2023/1032

10 January 2024

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for email of 7 December 2023 requesting under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), information relating to Council Christmas expenditure. Please see outlined below a response to each part of your request.

End-of-Year Bonuses:

Total amount paid in end-of-year bonuses to the CEO this Christmas.

Horowhenua District Council (the Council) does not provide end of year bonuses to the CEO.

Total amount paid in bonuses to staff employed by your organization this Christmas.

Council does not provide Christmas bonuses for staff.

Please also provide the same for Christmas 2022.

Please see response above.

Presents for Staff:

Total expenditure on presents for staff including but not limited to 'secret Santa' etc.

Council do not provide Christmas presents of any kind to staff.

Please include this cost for last year also.

Please see response above.

Christmas Parade:

Total expenditure breakdown on any Christmas parade hosted or funded by the Council this year. This should also include road closure impact assessments where possible.

There was no Christmas parade in Levin in 2023.

The Shannon Christmas Parade and Celebration was run by the Shannon Christmas Parade and Celebration Committee which is an external group. They received two grants from Council's facilitated funds which totaled \$6,233 out of two different contestable funding schemes.

Please include a cost breakdown for any Christmas parade last year.

The cost associated with the 2022 Christmas parade was \$1,995.00 for preliminary traffic management work. The Christmas parade was then cancelled due to wet weather.

Christmas Trees and lights:

Number of Christmas trees purchased and erected, and the cost of these purchases for this year.

The Council has not purchased any Christmas trees, nor has it erected any Christmas trees in 2023.

Please also include the cost for any Christmas lights for tree and any lights for buildings for this year.

Council annually installs Christmas lights on the following buildings:

Adventure Park Kiosk (Levin)
New World (Foxton)
Horseman Café (Shannon)
Shannon Library

At the time of writing this response, Council is yet to receive the invoice relating to the installation of those lights for 2023 costs.

Please also include the cost of both for last year, too.

Adventure Park Kiosk (Levin) - \$2,443.79
New World (Foxton) - \$1,069.17
Horseman Café (Shannon) and Shannon Library - \$1,305.45

The power consumption relating to the Christmas lights were \$868.17.

The cost associated with electrically testing and tagging the lights was \$1,923.20.

Please highlight if the council had any left over from last year.

The lights are reused each year.

Hiring Santa:

Breakdown of costs associated with hiring a Santa, if applicable.

This year a Santa was hired for 'Christmas in the Park' and that total cost was \$200.00.

Please also provide this information for last year, too.

There was no cost associated with the hiring of a Santa in 2022 as the Christmas parade was cancelled.

Christmas Market:

Breakdown of costs associated with running/hosting/sponsoring a Christmas market, if applicable.

Council itself does not organise, or host a Christmas market. However, in 2023, Council did partner with a local community group to host 'Christmas in the Park' which would have had a market type element. A breakdown of costs, is listed below:

Stage - \$3,335.00

Street Entertainers - \$1,539.10

Please provide this information for last year, too.

Council did not organise, host or sponsor a Christmas market in 2022. However due to bad weather, the Christmas Parade was canceled and therefore, Council contributed \$588.00 to cover the costs of bouncy castles towards a community Christmas event.

Christmas Party Supplies:

Please breakdown the amount spent on the following for the years 2022 and 2023:

	2022	2023
Wrapping paper	\$0	\$0
Santa hats	\$0	\$0
Alcohol for parties	\$174.72	\$0
Party hats	\$0	\$0
Christmas crackers	\$0	\$0
Christmas cards	\$0	\$0
Christmas decorations	\$0	\$0

Christmas Parties:

Total expenditure breakdown on Council Christmas parties. Please also include in the breakdown any travel arrangement costs.

Council did not have a staff Christmas party. However, the social club hosted and funded their own staff Christmas party and no council funds were used for the Christmas party.

To provide complete transparency, there was no Christmas party, but an end of year celebration was hosted in December for staff. Initially, the celebration was planned to take place at a local park but due to the unfavourable weather conditions, it was held inside the council building. The celebration included a sausage sizzle, ice cream and fizzy drinks for staff.

Please include this for last year, also.

Total expenditure for 2022 was \$1,841.68

Office Closure:

Duration of office closure during the Christmas period for the council generally.

Council closed from 5pm Friday, 22 December 2023 and reopened on Monday, 8 January 2024.

Please specify how many managers and senior executive staff are taking more hours/days out of office than is blanket across the council for the Christmas period.

The blanket period for the Christmas period was 25 December 2023 – 7 January 2024, which consisted of 4 stat days and 6 working days where annual leave was required to be taken. 12 Managers and Senior Executive Staff have taken more than those required days.

Does the Christmas office closure also affect contractors paid by the council? If not, how much are they being paid over the Christmas break in an hourly rate?

The office closure did cover contractors with the exception of a number of contractors that continued to be utilized to ensure any essential services were not impacted. Any contractors required to work to support essential services were paid as per their specific contracts. Non-essential contractors were not required to work.

Fines:

Does the council have any plans to increase fines for parking offences or any other offences during the Christmas period? If so, which fines are increasing, why and what revenue is expected to be raised?

There are no plans to increase fines for parking offences or any other offences during the Christmas period.

Infringement offence fees are established through legislation and most are set through regulations. Parking infringement fees are set through national regulations.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Horowhenua District Council publishes responses to Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) requests that we consider to be of wider public interest, or which relate to a subject that has been widely requested. To protect your privacy, we will not generally publish personal information about you, or information that identifies you. We will publish the LGOIMA response along with a summary of the request on our website. Requests and responses may be paraphrased.

If you would like to discuss this decision or any of the information provided as part of this request, please contact Jacinta Straker (Group Manager Organisation Performance) on jacintas@horowhenua.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi



Monique Davidson
Chief Executive