

# Council needs public's help

THE Waitomo District Council is seeking public assistance to prevent vandalism at Te Kuiti's Mangaokewa Reserve and Brook Park.

Mayor Brian Hanna says improving the district's open spaces to make them inviting and attractive places for everyone to enjoy is part of making the council's 'vibrant communities' vision a reality.

"This aspiration is hindered by a minority who are choosing to vandalise these areas [Mangaokewa Reserve and Brook Park] and undo the good work of council and community groups in our recreational reserves," he says.

"We are asking the public to help put a stop to the continued misuse of these areas by letting us know when they see suspicious behaviour or vandalism taking place."

## MANGAOKEWA RESERVE

Mr Hanna says the Mangaokewa Reserve on SH30 is a popular location for family picnics, overnight camping, bush walks, swimming and to view native birds.

"A video that went viral earlier this year shows the reckless behaviour by a driver racing his vehicle around the children's playground. The damage this caused to the grass area is still evident."

Although the council has installed bollards and chains to restrict unauthorised vehicle access, vandalism of the reserve remains an ongoing problem.

Earlier this year, the public toilets were covered with graffiti, toilets and cisterns have been smashed, the information board has been tagged

and a barbecue table removed from its fittings.

Mr Hanna says one option is to lock the gates, but the council would prefer to resolve this issue through other means.

"Project Manu is a community volunteer group who are working to preserve the forest and are focussed on controlling invasive pest weeds and maintaining bait station lines to combat rats and possums.

"The dumping of green waste along the edge of the picnic area and river banks is adding to the challenge of controlling weeds at the reserve.

"So we ask that people report suspicious behaviour and vandalism to the Te Kuiti Police and Waitomo District Council by taking note of the vehicle registration number and details of the vandalism."

## BROOK PARK

Similar vandalism issues also take place at Brook Park on Te Kumi Rd including fire damage to the public toilets and unauthorised vehicles accessing the picnic area and doing wheelies on the lawns.

Deputy mayor Guy Whitaker says a committee is trying to improve the reserve by putting up new informative signage and fencing around the carpark to restrict access.

"The Brook Park Incorporated Society and Waitomo District Council have been busy making improvements in an effort to encourage people to visit this location," he says.



**UNDER FIRE:** Repairs to the public toilets at Te Kuiti's Brook Park are set to take place next month after they were deliberately set on fire in July. PHOTO SUPPLIED

"The summit [Motakiora pa site] offers spectacular views over Te Kuiti and there is much to enjoy along the way including the collection of exotic and native tree species and the Barry Blackman collection of conifers."

Other improvements include new information panels that describe the natural features of Brook Park, the different species of birds and wildlife and the Maori and farming history

of the area.

The walking tracks have also been re-marked to make them easy to follow and improvements have been made to the fencing and gates.

For more information on how to help The Brook Park Incorporated Society and take part in regular working bees to improve the area contact Mr Whitaker.

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