

[View weather](#)

[View tide data](#)

- [Your Council](#)

- [News and Events](#)

The latest Council news and events

- [Meet the team](#)

Our staff and elected representatives

- [Meetings and Agendas](#)

Find out about upcoming meetings and read agendas

- [Community outcomes](#)

Social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing

- [Requests for Information](#)

How to request official information from the Council

- [Visit the Chatham Islands](#)

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- [Local elections 2022](#)

Information on the upcoming local election

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- [Previous newsletters](#)

- [Our submissions](#)

- [Services](#)

- [Primary Services](#)

[Infrastructure](#) [Waste Management](#) [Pest Management](#) [Biodiversity](#) [Emergency Management](#) [Resource Management](#)

- [Community and Culture](#)

[Animal Control](#) [Cemeteries](#) [Library Services](#) [Gambling Venues Policy](#) [Historic Places](#) [Heartlands](#)

- [Rates, Consents and Licensing](#)

[Your Rates](#) [Building and Resource Consents](#) [Food and Alcohol Licensing](#) [Council Dues & Charges](#)

- [Coastal Services](#)

[Port Charges](#) [Navigation Safety](#) [Swing Moorings](#) [Marine Pests](#)

- [Environmental Data](#)

[Rainfall Data](#) [River Flow and Water Level Data](#) [Soil Temperature Data](#) [Tide Predictions](#) [Water Quality Data](#) [Wind Data](#)

- [Essential Freshwater package](#)

[What are the new regulations?](#) [Freshwater Farm Plans](#) [Wetland management](#) [Stock exclusion](#) [Fish passage](#)

- [Documents](#)

- [Annual Plan](#)

Sets out our work and priorities for the next financial year

- [Long-Term Plan](#)

Our work and priorities for the next decade

- [Annual Report](#)

An overview of the Council's activity

- [Resource Management Document](#)

[View weather](#)

[View tide data](#)

Resource management framework summary

- [Regional Land Transport Programme](#)

Transport priorities for 2021 – 2031

- [Dog Control Policy & Bylaw](#)

Dog Control Bylaw overview

- [Vehicles on Beaches Bylaw](#)

Waitangi Beach vehicle bylaw

- [Rates Remission Policy on Māori & Moriori Freehold Land](#)

- [Navigation Safety Bylaws](#)

Managing boating and other activities on water

- [CDEM Group Plan](#)

Understanding hazards and risks to build capability

- [Investment Strategy](#)

A report on the Chatham Islands economy

- [Annual Plan](#)

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- [Search all Documents](#)

- [Contact](#)

- [View weather](#)

- [View tide data](#)

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▫ [News and Events / 2020](#)

- [News and Events](#)
- [Meet the team](#)
- [Meetings and Agendas](#)
- [Community outcomes](#)
- [Requests for Information](#)
- [Visit the Chatham Islands](#)
- [Local elections 2022](#)
- [Subscribe to our newsletter](#)
- [Previous newsletters](#)
- [Our submissions](#)

A sustainable visitor industry

- Last Updated 23 Feb 2024

This article has been published on behalf of Tourism Chatham Islands; its content should not be taken as the views of the Chatham Islands Council.

Last year when Tourism Chatham Islands (TCI) was established, who would have predicted the current situation with visitors to the Chatham Islands today. TCI's main function is visitor management, and its establishment has proved timely.

Our vision is to create a sustainable visitor industry, providing engaging experiences and quality services to visitors for the benefit and enhancement of the Chatham Islands community.

It has been very important to have a dedicated tourism body with good management to work through the

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challenges brought about by COVID-19 and this unprecedented spike in tourism. We are involved in a number of projects and there is much more work ahead to achieve our vision.

We are working with the Council to provide new toilets around the Island with funding gained from the Government's Tourism Infrastructure Fund. A partnership has been set up with Qualmark to provide business advice and help with things like health and safety, supporting new businesses, and encouraging careers in tourism – particularly for young Chatham Islanders.

We recently hosted a visit with Stephen England-Hall (Chief Executive) and Paul Yeo (Industry Relations Manager) from Tourism New Zealand to ensure they understand the challenges facing the Island. A number of meetings have also been held with various Government and industry organisations to ensure the Chatham Islands is considered and included in planning and funding.

Stephen England-Hall and Paul Yeo at the Northern Volcanics



Stephen England-Hall (Chief Executive) and Paul Yeo (Industry Relations Manager) from Tourism New Zealand at the Northern Volcanics

Jackie Gurden with Stephen England-Hall and Paul Yeo at Glory Cottage



Jackie Gurden (Manager, Chatham Islands Tourism) with Stephen England-Hall and Paul Yeo at Glory Cottage

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Planning is underway for some of our special sites to enhance protection of the environment, assets, visitor safety and the overall experience. Funding was gained from Heritage New Zealand and work is about to begin on the restoration of the Stone Cottage. An application has also been lodged for the Ponga Whare restoration.

A Voluntary Visitor Levy has been set up and companies bringing people to the Island are being invited to contribute \$25 per visitor to TCI that will be invested back into Island infrastructure and projects. One company is donating \$100 per visitor to the swimming pool. Visitors are also being invited to contribute to the new civic and museum building and the Taiko Trust.

While marketing is not a priority in the current climate, [the Island's website\(external link\)](#) and brochure have been renewed. These contain messages we are keen to get to visitors such as pre-booking tours, not crossing private land, not removing natural and archaeological taonga from the Island, and enjoying their fish on this Island. We have also been working with Tourism New Zealand to have the Island included on their website, as well as seeking support from them to manage a wide range of other requests from potential visitors and media.

Our focuses for 2021 include training, professional development and encouraging new opportunities. The aim is to continue working with businesses through Qualmark, including offering social media, online and digital courses. These are being planned for the weeks of 15th and 23rd February. These will be open to anyone, not just tourism businesses – if you are interested, [please get in touch with me](#).

Your feedback on the work of TCI and tourism on the Island is always welcomed and encouraged, please don't hesitate to contact me at manager@chathamislands.co.nz

Jackie Gurden
Manager, Chatham Islands Tourism



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[Meetings and Agendas](#)

[View weather](#)

[View tide data](#)

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[Requests for Information](#)

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[Primary Services](#)

[Community and Culture](#)

[Rates, Consents and Licensing](#)

[Coastal Services](#)

[Environmental Data](#)

[Essential Freshwater](#)

Documents & Forms

[Key Documents](#)

[Search all Documents](#)

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