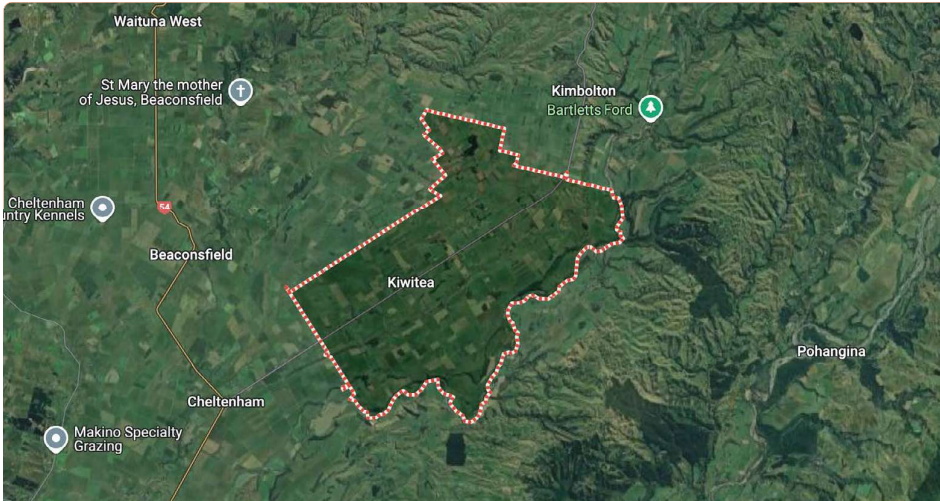


# Kiwitea Community Plan



third  
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 **MANAWATŪ**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



## What you'll find in this plan

This Community Plan has been prepared on behalf of the Kiwitea community which approximately covers the area outlined in the map.

The content in this Community Plan is a summary of discussions from a community planning workshop held in April 2025.

The Community Plan provides:

- > History of Kiwitea;
- > A summary of the Community Planning process;
- > A shared community vision statement;
- > Three strategies that will help implement the vision;
- > A list of actions that have come from the community;

This Community Plan is intended to be a living document that is updated and refreshed on a regular basis.

Please contact the Kiwitea Community Committee for further information on this Community Plan.

# Community planning in Manawatū

## Kiwitea Community Planning Programme

The Manawatū District Council's Community Planning Programme supports our community to shape a shared vision for the future of Kiwitea. It creates a space for collaboration between residents, Council, and other agencies to drive positive, place-based change.

### The programme's aims are to:

- > Set a clear strategic direction that reflects Kiwitea's unique rural character and community values.
- > Provide a practical pathway for community aspirations to influence Council and agency planning.
- > Strengthen community identity and pride, helping to attract and retain residents.
- > Empower locals to actively shape the future of their place.
- > Build strong working relationships between Kiwitea residents, community groups, elected members, and Council staff.

The Kiwitea Community Committee led this process by hosting workshops and collecting local feedback. The plan outlines a shared vision, current challenges, and opportunities for improvement. It includes an action list—some simple and achievable in the short-term, others requiring more planning and support.

This Community Plan will guide local priorities and support Council in aligning investment and initiatives with what matters most to Kiwitea. Actions identified may be considered through Council's Long Term Plan, Annual Plan, or via partnerships with external agencies.

# History of Kiwitea



Alexander John Perry

## 1850s–1870s: Māori occupation and early land survey

The area now known as Kiwitea is located within the traditional rohe of several iwi, including Rangitāne, Ngāti Raukawa, and Ngāti Kauwhata. These groups occupied and moved through the wider Manawatū region, utilising the Ōroua River for transport and resources. Following Crown land purchases during the 19th century, the Kiwitea Block was surveyed in 1876. Survey plans included proposed settlements at Kiwitea and Beaconsfield. At the time of survey, the area was densely forested and sparsely populated by European settlers.<sup>1</sup>

## 1880s–1900s: Early European settlement and public institutions

In 1877, settlers Alexander Perry and Thomas Taylor purchased significant tracts of land in the area. Perry acquired 900 acres and established a homestead. Taylor, who also acquired land that year, worked on the development of rail infrastructure in the region. Although a rail route through Kiwitea was considered, the main line was ultimately

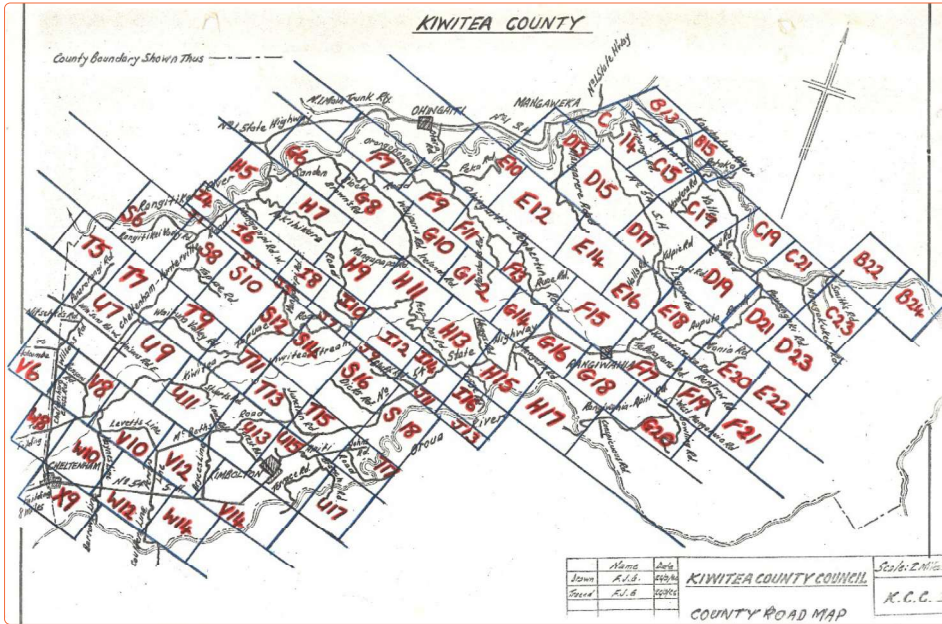


Although thought to be 1897 it is more likely that this photograph relates to the flood of 1894, when the Kiwitea Bridge was destroyed.

constructed elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Kiwitea School opened in 1884 on Perry's Line and served the educational needs of local families. In 1890, St Agnes Anglican Church was constructed adjacent to the school. The church was designed by Wellington-based architect Frederick de Jersey Clere, who was responsible for numerous Anglican churches in the lower North Island.<sup>3</sup>

## 1920s–1950s: Community infrastructure and agricultural activity

In 1922, the current Kiwitea Hall was constructed at the corner of Kimbolton Road and Perry Line, replacing an earlier facility. The hall was used for a variety of community functions, including meetings, dances, and other events.<sup>4</sup> Agriculture continued to be the primary economic activity in the area. The school and church remained operational, and the district retained its rural character throughout this period.



Kiwitea County Map from 28-03-1974. This series contains a set of aerial photographs purchased by the Kiwitea County from NZ Aerial Mapping. The photographs cover most of the county and are 1:10,000 scale.

Ref: Aerial Photographs of Kiwitea County | Archives Central

### 1950s–1990s: Population shifts

National changes in agriculture, rural service delivery, and transport were reflected in Kiwitea during the latter half of the 20th century. Despite widespread school consolidations elsewhere, Kiwitea School remained open during this period. The Kiwitea Hall and St Agnes Church continued to function during this time, maintaining their original purposes as community and religious venues.



Kiwitea Church – St Agnes – Unknown

### 2000s–Present: Retention of core facilities

Kiwitea School remains in operation as a state full primary school, serving Years 1 to 8. As of the most recent estimate, the school has a roll of approximately 66 students.<sup>5</sup> What was previously a playcentre facility is now being run as a playgroup. The facility is adjacent to the school and provides a space for parents and preschoolers to have a catchup and play once a week. It is also an important feeder to the school. The Kiwitea Hall continues to be used for events and is listed on the Manawatū District Council’s register of community facilities. St Agnes Anglican Church remains standing beside the school and is a registered heritage site. Agriculture continues to be the dominant land use in the area, and Kiwitea retains its rural character.

References:

- 1 Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand – Rangitāne, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Kauwhata iwi entries.
- 2 Wikipedia (Kiwitea) and heritage references from Manawatū District Council and Papers Past.
- 3 Heritage New Zealand and Manawatū District Council – Church of St Agnes, Kiwitea.
- 4 Manawatū District Council – Community Halls Register.
- 5 Education Counts – Kiwitea School Roll Estimate 2023\_24.

# Community planning in Manawatū

## Community Workshop

In March 2025, we held a community workshop at the KIWITEA Community Hall to help shape the future direction of the KIWITEA Community Plan.

There was a strong community presence, with around 30 locals turning up to be part of the kōrero. The session brought people together to reflect on where KIWITEA stands today, where we want to go, and the steps needed to get there. Together, we explored community goals, local challenges, and future opportunities—looking closely at the realities facing our district now and in the years ahead.

It was a relaxed, interactive session with group discussions, sticky notes, and themed activity stations designed to spark ideas and capture a wide range of perspectives.

In addition to gathering feedback, we also worked through a theming process and began to prioritise the main goals for the plan. This helped sharpen the focus and gave us a clearer sense of what matters most to the community.

This input now forms the foundation of the draft plan and ensures it reflects KIWITEA's collective voice and vision from the start.



# Map of Kiwitea



# Current issues and constraints

Through the Community Planning process, we've uncovered the key issues, constraints and challenges facing our community:

Coulters Line bridge remains unfixed and at risk in future floods.

No walkways or safe pedestrian links between key sites like the school, hall, and church.

Safety concerns around the school bus stop stem from a lack of footpaths, speeding, narrow roads, and poor visibility, making walking unsafe for children and families.

Weak internet access affects farming operations, local businesses, and remote work opportunities, while also limiting access to online learning – making digital education and remote schooling less viable for local families.

Busy highway.

Narrow rural roads are struggling to safely accommodate increased traffic and larger vehicles.

Hall still needs upgrades to make it more usable (e.g. heaters for winter).

# The Opportunities

As we explored what Kiwitea could look like in the future — shaped by our vision and current challenges — we identified a range of ideas and opportunities. These

have been developed into clear actions outlined in the Action Plan section of our Community Plan.

Make Kiwitea more than just a crossroads.

Use the facilities that Kiwitea already has—make sure people are aware of what is available.

Small improvements can make it safer for cars, cyclists and walkers to use our roads.

Coordination across Community Committee, school, church, and playgroup.

Get more people involved in activities, helping make new residents welcome and connected.

Make the most of the rural character, landscape and environment we've got.

Everything is close together, so need to connect them in ways that improve safety.

# Kiwitea Community Workshop thematic insights

## Thriving

Many comments pointed to the importance of shared spaces like the hall, school, and church. While people see these facilities as valuable, there's a sense that they're underused socially. Suggestions included more events – like sports, movies, or gatherings – and networking to bring more locals in. Continuing with hall upgrades are seen positively, but the challenge remains in getting broader community involvement.

## Safe

Road safety was a strong concern – from speed near the school to blind corners and narrow roads. The main intersection (the 'crossroads') by the hall and the dip on Kimbolton Road were flagged as visibility issues. There's also concern about how roading infrastructure is coping with larger vehicles. The safety of kids walking or biking came through a few times, as did a general desire to keep the area safe and accessible for all.

## Connected

Connectivity was mostly about physical access – the desire for paths, walkways, and safe links between key places like the school, hall, and playgroup. There's also frustration with roading infrastructure, like the state of Coulters Line bridge (flooding) and general access routes. Pedestrian gates between properties (with landowners' consent) were mentioned as one idea for improving local connectivity.

## Growth

While not the most discussed theme, the comments reflected a clear desire for sustainable growth that supports the existing community. Poor cellphone and internet coverage stood out as a key frustration, along with a wish for better signage and basic service improvements. The feedback suggests people aren't looking for big development – instead, they want smart, managed growth that maintains Kiwitea's rural character while ensuring essential services keep pace with the needs of locals.



## Kiwitea snapshot

Welcoming, safe and supportive rural community which strives to be well-connected and friendly.

We encourage locals to be environmentally conscious and keep the area tidy and appealing.

### Thriving

Support community life by improving local facilities and encouraging events that bring people together.

### Safe

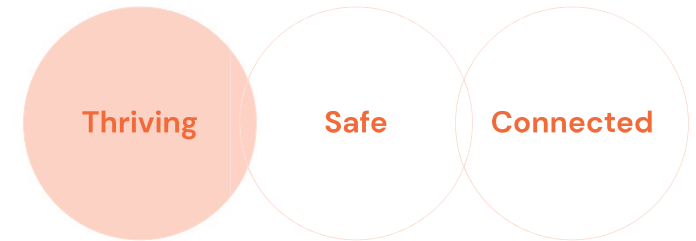
Make Kiwitea safer through road upgrades, better signage, and safe access for our walkers and cyclists.

### Connected

Improve access between key sites and essential services (internet, cell coverage, signage) to strengthen daily connections and community ties.

# Thriving

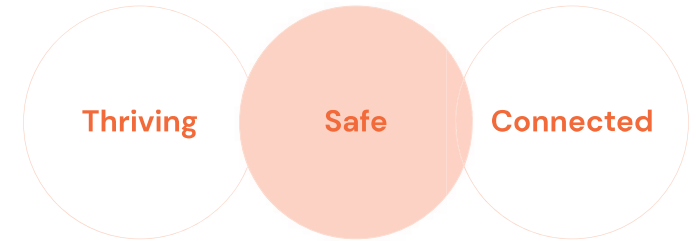
Goal: Support community life by improving local facilities and encouraging events that bring people together.



	Action	Who to involve	First Actions
1	Complete hall upgrades (painting, floor polishing, porch, heat pumps)	MDC, CET Trust (heat pumps), ECCT (other upgrades)	Apply for community facility funding, plan and schedule works
2	Promote shared use of community facilities and activate them for events	School, church, volunteers	Coordinate a shared calendar, advertise availability, develop seasonal events, and seek funding support
3	Welcome and involve more residents in community life and leadership	School, playgroup	Create a welcome pack, host intro events, promote Community Committee involvement via social media, the school and word of mouth

# Safe

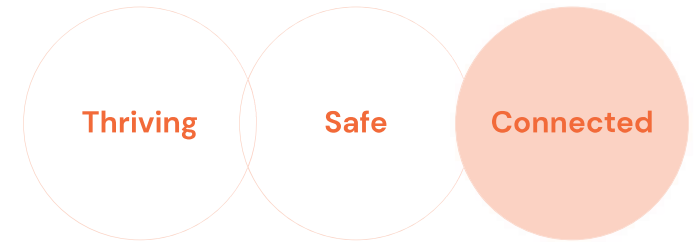
Goal: Make Kiwitea safer through road upgrades, better signage, and safe access for our walkers and cyclists.



	Action	Who to involve	First Actions
1	Prioritise and submit known road safety concerns to MDC (e.g. Perry's Line, Kimbolton Rd intersection)	MDC, residents	Prepare a formal request to MDC, include photos and workshop feedback, and follow up with the roading team
2	Request speed reviews and signage improvements around school and hall, especially during school travel times	School, MDC	Gather feedback from school and residents, prepare a written request with photos and clear rationale, and submit to MDC. Suggest specific signage or speed limit changes and follow up for action.
3	Improve pedestrian access and crossings between key sites (e.g. hall, playgroup, school)	MDC, school, playgroup	Identify key crossing points, meet with MDC to discuss suitable traffic calming or pedestrian safety options
4	Request removal of roadside vegetation that impacts driver visibility	MDC roading team	Identify priority sites (e.g. Perry's Line), submit request to council for vegetation removal
5	Advocate for repair and flood protection of Coulters Line bridge	MDC, Horizons Regional Council	Raise concerns about closures during flooding, document impacts on access and safety, request inclusion in future works or flood protection planning

# Connected

Goal: Improve access between key sites and essential services to strengthen daily connections and community ties.



	Action	Who to involve	First Actions
1	Advocate for better cellphone coverage and internet service	Service providers, local MPs, MDC	Identify service gaps, raise issues with providers and regional reps, support community submissions
2	Seek improved signage for Kiwitea	MDC	Request village signage upgrade or replacement, highlight importance for identity and visibility
3	Ensure any future growth is managed to reflect Kiwitea's rural setting	MDC planners, residents	Provide input into district plan processes, share local values with council, monitor zoning or development proposals
4	Develop safe walking routes between key places (e.g. school, hall, church, playgroup)	MDC, landowners	Map priority links, chat with Council about requesting walkway or lime path projects
5	Explore opportunities for pedestrian gates between properties (with landowners' consent)	Landowners	Gauge interest, assess feasibility, and determine if there's community support for trialling the idea

# Kiwitea Community Plan

Third Bearing Limited is a regionally-based advisory firm that has been serving businesses, organisations, local government and central Government for over 20 years.

We apply a data and design approach to whatever we undertake, whether it is a large-scale business case for a national client or a small-scale engagement with a community organisation. Storytelling is extremely important to us – the best analysis needs to be communicated in a way that everyone can understand.



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