

Grant Dally

Q1. Contact Details

Name	Grant Dally
What Council are you standing for?	Western Bay of Plenty District Council
What position(s) are you standing for on the above Council?	Mayor and Councillor - Maketu-Te Puke Ward

Q2. What drives you to run as a candidate in the local body elections? What do you hope to achieve?

I have now served 3 terms as a Maketu-Te Puke Ward Cr for WBOPDC, it is a privilege being elected to represent our people at the Council table, I don't take it for granted and feel there is an ever-present obligation to remain vigilant and be aware of issues that arise for all residents and ratepayers. I know how the system operates, the timeframes for the planning processes and how to get things done. I want to make a difference and improve our situation, whether it's better planning, more housing, fixing roading and traffic, and just general wellbeing for all of us.

Te Puke is currently experiencing a lot of housing growth with several large subdivisions well underway, the infrastructure is now struggling, especially the roading network. Addressing the needs of Te Puke and ensuring the productive economy is not constrained is currently our most pressing need. My priority is to fix the traffic issues, with short term fixes to free things up and also planning for longer term, more expensive solutions.

Council staff are now doing due diligence on setting up a new CCO Water Organisation with Tauranga City. We need to make sure we have the best possible protections in the agreements for WBOPDC ratepayers. From appointing the best directors, developing a robust Statement of Expectation, reasonable water charges, to ensuring we are not marginalised by TCC with a fair and equitable shareholder agreement.

The other major initiative is working with TCC, BOPRC and the Government on the City and Regional Deal details. Once again, the deal needs to be right for WBOPDC and not impose additional financial burdens on existing ratepayers. New funding tools are proposed, but details are still unknown. I will be pushing for recognition of a new road connecting Te Puke to the Papamoa East Interchange and the Katikati Bypass, as new Roads of Regional Significance, for potential inclusion in the deal.

Q3. How will you support the kiwifruit industry?

The kiwifruit industry is the reason Te Puke and the Western Bay is such an economic powerhouse. It is the major source of jobs, wealth, rates income and trickle-down benefit to the rest of the community. Council needs to be supportive and enabling without imposing too many regulatory roadblocks or holdups. A lot of our planning is based on legislation which the current government is relaxing to make it easier for development.

Council works closely with the electricity companies for planning purposes. I'm actively advocating for roading improvements from rural roads from orchards to packhouses, through Te Puke, down the TEL to the Port.

I have sought assistance from NZTA during kiwifruit season to look at turning off the toll charge on the TEL during the traffic peak (maybe 2 hours) in the evening to reduce the queues into Te Puke and encourage motorists to take that route instead. I will take this up again with the NZTA Regional Director after the election. The previous director was open to the idea, but he has now moved on.

Q4. What will you do to support the development of seasonal worker housing, especially in rural areas?

We are overdue on reviewing and updating our District Plan. All the changes to the RMA and other legislation that have been signalled and worked through by the last 2 governments has meant we have delayed this process until we have certainty in what's in and what's out. We did proceed with development of a new Te Puke Spatial Plan and quite a bit of work has already gone into that. One thing I suggested early on was looking at allowing extra titles for housing on dairy, orchard and lifestyle blocks

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where it wouldn't be impinging on productive land; it was close to good roading; water supply and suitable land for septic tank systems was available; and in the case of lifestyle blocks with good size sections, it was unlikely to be converted to productive land.

Mike Montgomery used to say, there's 2 jobs per ha of kiwifruit orchard. These people need to be housed somewhere, preferably close to where they'll be working.

I think the RSE accommodation rules seem to be working well with development of many new facilities.

However, if anyone has ideas on how to improve things, we will listen to any ideas or proposals, that could be advanced through Council.

We need to be open to more hamlet-style or hub and spoke housing developments as proposed by Te Puke Economic Development Group over many years. The growth of the kiwifruit industry has also meant there's a need for more and better houses in general for the increased number of middle and upper management employees and their extended families, not just RSE worker accommodation. Small, concentrated housing developments should be considered as long as they follow good placemaking rules for the residents and are not too far from main centres.

Q5. How will you ensure kiwifruit growers have reliable access to water, and how will you balance competing demands?

This is probably more a question for the Regional Council, in terms of water allocations. I have heard that the science employed to determine reliability or sustainability of aquifers has been questioned by some. WBOPDC chooses to source our municipal drinking water supply from bores rather than surface supplies. So, we do need to ensure that takes priority over commercial use. We've held our consents for a while.

Having worked at Think Water Te Puke for 3 years I'm supportive of pond storage and pumping solutions. Rural supplies are available from Council with larger pipe connections, which do come with higher fixed charges as the size increases. I haven't heard any complaints about this. Although in our last Long-Term Plan we signalled the volumetric charges would likely rise over time. This will be something for growers to consider if Council supplies their water in this manner.

We have traditionally maintained a lower volumetric charge compared to other Councils; however, this will now come under the watch of the new Water Organisation and the Economic Regulator. We will be asking for price stability, but this has been largely imposed by central government directive.

Council has traditionally extended the reticulated water network into rural areas as demand grew. We established a policy of trickle-feed supply in outer areas for new houses where tanks could be filled slowly and pressure pumps used to supply from there. This seems to be working okay. It is more cost-effective than continuing to increase capacity and performance at the source for endless high pressure network expansion.

Q6. What is your stance on protecting productive horticultural land from urban sprawl and subdivision?

Refer answer to Q4 as well. Like I said earlier we are currently finalising the Draft Te Puke Spatial Plan before going out for public consultation. Most of the possible future urban areas around the fringes of Te Puke are currently in kiwifruit. We need to balance the needs of additional housing with the most appropriate places for it, where infrastructure support is already provided in the most cost-effective manner. I look forward to submissions from the industry on this matter next year.

Q7. How will you improve rural road infrastructure to support the movement of produce?

Driving round the district on the rural roads it's clear some roads are not up to scratch and we need to be proactive in fixing issues, but also maintain a regular schedule of upgrades and improvements in the neediest places. I recently discovered we don't have a comprehensive condition register of all the roads in the district. If re-elected I will be pushing for this with notes on known issues, rehab or upgrade plans, priorities and timeframes. Also, for this to be published on Council's website for everyone to access and add additional information to from a user perspective (we do some of this already for unsealed roads).

We have a seal extension policy which was reviewed in terms of priority criteria a few years ago. We had to cut back the funding during the last LTP by \$500k, however I am supportive of continuing this initiative, as often roading is one of the few things rural ratepayers see for their rates, so they should be able to expect a well-maintained road and a plan for future improvements.

Q8. What policies will you support to help growers adapt to climate change impacts?

The science seems to be evolving on the impacts of climate change, especially with regard to sea level rise. We do need to continue testing the assumptions being made, make sure the information we hold is accurate and reasonable. Take the best advice we can get, consider all the options, while balancing the requirements of the community, the economy and the environment. And make sure we share all the information with those affected.

The most impactful events we are seeing is more frequent heavy rainfall events that can have a catastrophic effect as we saw during the events of Jan/Feb 2023. I'm all for instituting a targeted rate to assist with clean-ups after events of this nature and to do more in the way of preventative maintenance upstream in rivers and streams. I put in a personal submission to the last BOPRC LTP to this effect. Contouring of new orchards also needs to be carefully done and monitored as there can unintended consequences for downstream properties, so I am in favour of current rules around this. I have seen some bad cases where this has gone wrong.

Stormwater flow paths will become a bigger issue for private property owners and Council going forward. More preventative measures and control mechanisms will likely be required.