

# New art gallery for Featherston's main street

Marisa King

By the time you read this, visitors to the Wairarapa will have yet another reason to stop in Featherston.

As this issue of the *Phoenix* was being prepared, Thérèse Quinlivan and her husband John Dennison were in the thick of preparations for the opening of their latest venture, The Old Courthouse Art Gallery.

The Gallery will share Featherston's historic courthouse building (next to the Library) with the Information Centre. Open from 10am to 5pm, Thursday to Monday, it will offer works for sale from a diverse range of South Wairarapa artists. The project was inspired by a Facebook conversation about the lack of suitable spaces for local artists to exhibit and sell their work. Thanks to Covid, a lot of exhibitions and markets are being cancelled, right at the time of year when artists make their highest sales.

"The conversation was going back and forth and in the end I thought, 'We just have to do something about it'," said Thérèse. Joss Konig, who previously ran the Information Centre, mentioned the historic courthouse building as a potential space. "We came down and had a look and thought, 'Amazing building, it could really work,'" said Thérèse. She emailed South Wairarapa Mayor Alex Beijen, who agreed to meet them at the courthouse the following morning. "He loved the idea of the gallery and said, 'Put a proposal to the Council'. We did that and it was approved on 5 November."

A "soft opening" was planned for the week of 22 November, with an official celebration due to be held in early December. The artwork will be carefully curated to ensure the Gallery features the work of both established and emerging artists at a range of price points. Thérèse and John are also keen to include work from new Māori artists.

Interest among South Wairarapa's artistic community has been high. Work from artists such as photographer Pete Monk, Jo



Thérèse Quinlivan and John Dennison

Lysaght (linocut prints), Howie Griffin (oils and ceramics) and Kieran Olson of Norse Ironworks (metalwork) will be some of the first to feature at the new venue.

"Everything has just slotted into place," said Thérèse, while admitting it had been a whirlwind of activity to get everything ready. "We know that artists want this; now we just need to find out if the public want it."

Thérèse and John have lived in Featherston for the past two years. Thérèse creates needle-felt pictures using wool, silk and other natural elements in her workshop studio, The Maggie's Nest, and offers needle-felting classes. John is a leadlighter and creates stained-glass artwork.

They also run a bed and breakfast from their home, the historic Hodder House cottage on Wakefield Street.

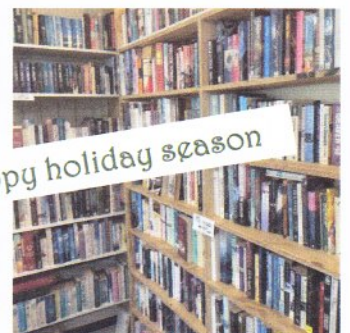
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## Featherston's Op Shop

### HOLIDAY HOURS

Tues, Weds & Thurs 10-2  
 Friday & Saturday 10-4  
 Sunday/Monday if possible 10-2  
 CLOSED 24 to 28 Dec  
 then 31<sup>st</sup> Dec to 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022



We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season



Featherston's Own Charitable Trust