

Virtually written off in the 1970's, the tiny rural community of Gibbston revitalised itself by developing wine tourism alongside the existing adventure tourism (A J Hackett Bungy, white-water rafting and river surfing) and within the context of their history. In 1997, a small group of vineyard owners petitioned Council to include special provisions in the District Plan that acknowledged Gibbston's special character. Shortly thereafter, in May 1998, the Gibbston Community Association was incorporated to represent the interests of everyone in the valley whether or not they were involved in the wine industry. Their mission is to protect, preserve and promote the unique characteristics of Gibbston as an area of special character. Every penny that they raise through subscriptions or fundraising goes to their community projects. They are a 100% volunteer group – no one is paid.

After 6 challenging years clearing briar and gorse, raising $1.4million, and building 14 bridges along 8km of the Kawarau River, this community of less than 100 families opened the Gibbston River Trail and gifted it to the people of New Zealand on 4th December 2010.

They've also developed:• a highway rest area, • a community reserve, • a community rubbish and recycling depot, • rescued a 150-year old orchard and gold-mining settlement and developed car parking, picnic and toilet facilities, and interpretive signage• and raised more than $60,000 for local charities. In February 2011, they were selected as the New Zealand Community of the Year.

Details

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Website

www.facebook.com/Gibbston-Community-Association-NZ-1815541138458764/