

# Clarity, Control, Confidence

How Grey District Council  
Modernised Meetings and  
Reclaimed Time with Infocouncil



# Introducing Grey District Council

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Situated on the rugged West Coast of New Zealand's South Island, Grey District is a region known for its strong community spirit, stunning natural landscapes, and forward-thinking local governance. At the heart of this district lies Greymouth, its largest town and administrative hub, which serves as a gateway to the coast's rich heritage, diverse economy, and deep cultural roots.

The Grey District Council (GDC) plays a central role in shaping the region's future. It is guided by a bold and inclusive vision to create a thriving, connected, and resilient Grey District. This vision underpins all strategic planning and service delivery, anchoring the Council's efforts across four key pillars: economic, social, cultural, and environmental development.

Economically, the District is focused on building a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy, supported by vital infrastructure and robust partnerships with businesses, industry, and community organisations. Socially, GDC champions a safe, inclusive, and empowered community through quality public facilities, connectivity, and civic engagement. Culturally, the District honours its unique Māori heritage and fosters vibrant community identity through ongoing collaboration with iwi and neighbouring councils. Environmentally, GDC adopts a strategic and resilient approach to challenges such as climate change, water sustainability, and green space planning, ensuring that future generations inherit a district that is both liveable and prosperous.

The Council's commitment to innovation, resilience, and community wellbeing is evident in its approach to governance. With a strong focus on collaboration, transparency, and sustainable growth, Grey District Council continues to balance tradition with progress. From supporting local economic initiatives to promoting arts, sports, and recreation, GDC consistently works to create a district that people are proud to live in and contribute to.



# Council Life Before Infocouncil

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Before adopting Infocouncil, Grey District Council (GDC) relied on a manual, Word- and Adobe-based system to prepare, format and publish meeting agendas and minutes. The process was labour-intensive, heavily reliant on individual knowledge of document styling, and prone to errors. Collaboration between report authors was clunky and inefficient, often relying on back and forth emails, resulting in version control issues and delays close to publication deadlines.



“The ‘old way’ was really cumbersome and clunky and time consuming. Once the reports were verified, a lot of time had to be spent formatting reports. Now with Infocouncil templates the final process is so much quicker, efficient and the end product looks much more professional.”

- Trish Jellyman, Democracy Advisor and EA to the ELT

The challenges were amplified during the COVID-19 lockdown, when Trish Jellyman, GDC’s Democracy Advisor, had to manage council meetings from home using Teams and Word documents, without the clarity or control she needed. As she elaborated, **“Three weeks after I started, we went into lockdown, so I worked from home for five weeks and had to form agendas and run council meetings from the dining table.”** This led to mounting pressure to ensure accuracy and on-time delivery, with little visibility across the broader reporting workflow. This clearly illustrated to her during this heightened time that ‘the old ways,’ as she put it, were no longer tenable going forward, and a better way of working needed to be sourced.

“I never felt the old system was safe and robust and there was always the risk of documents becoming uncontrolled. It wasn’t just the document itself; it was the collaboration aspect that was frustrating. Now with large departmental reports with multiple report writers the risk is pretty much eliminated.”

- Trish Jellyman, Democracy Advisor and EA to the ELT

## The Situation

- Agendas and minutes were manually processed using Word and Adobe.
- Labour-intensive and time-consuming process to finalise reports.
- Difficult to track where individual reports were up to.
- Errors and version control issues caused delays and frustration.
- Lack of consistency in report formatting and presentation.
- No clear workflow or dashboard for agenda progress.
- Collaboration via Teams and email was unreliable and disorganised.

## Enter Infocouncil

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Infocouncil was first introduced to Grey District Council through a former Executive who had experienced the system in another local government role. Trish and the team did further due diligence by reviewing how other New Zealand councils in their networks, whom they knew were using the platform. What they saw convinced them.

From there, the Council participated in a demo, accepted a proposal, and began implementation soon after. The implementation of the training and onboarding process took around 4 months until the system was successfully rolled out and live. The process included custom system configuration, tailored template design, and structured training with ongoing support.

Christine from Infocouncil led the training, providing clear, easy-to-follow guidance, which was especially helpful given that the team was coming from a heavily manual background. The transition was smooth, thanks to accessible documentation, responsive support, and the structured learning environment provided by the implementation team.

“I really enjoyed the setting up process and Christine was just wonderful. Her training style is spot on with clear instructions, that are easy to follow and include screenshots which help greatly. Knowing that someone is always available from Infocouncil’s helpdesk is most reassuring especially when getting out the first agendas for Council and committees.”

- **Trish Jellyman**, Democracy Advisor and EA to the ELT



# Council Life with Infocouncil

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Since going live with Infocouncil, Grey District Council has transformed the way it manages governance processes. What used to take hours is now done in minutes. Cloning reports, previewing attachments, managing report authorisation, and forming agendas and minutes are now streamlined and efficient. Trish and her colleague, the only two responsible for sending agendas, can now handle late reports or last-minute updates without stress.



**“Once all the reports are authorised and you’ve got them in the right order that you want... it’s 10 minutes at most if it’s massive, and just like that your agenda’s done!”**

- **Trish Jellyman**, Democracy Advisor and EA to the ELT

The ability to “create a paper” and reorder agenda items on the fly has given the team incredible flexibility, while the visibility over each report’s status has introduced a level of transparency they never had before. Public-facing documents have also benefitted, with immediate recognition praised upon the improvements from the very beginning of Infocouncils support, with hyperlinks and clear formatting that make navigation easy.

**“All the councillors commented on the first meeting how much more modern and polished it looked.”**

- **Trish Jellyman**, Democracy Advisor and EA to the ELT

Infocouncil has also enabled process standardisation across group managers and their teams. Trish now clones previous reports, pre-populates them with headings, highlights them for updates, and everyone can see where things are up to, no more chasing through Teams or relying on assumptions.

**“We’ve got four group managers with at least four staff each... and they can all see what’s been done and what hasn’t. It just makes it so much easier.”**

- **Trish Jellyman**, Democracy Advisor and EA to the ELT

## The Outcomes

- ✓ Saved significant time, up to 75% for agenda and minutes preparation.
- ✓ Improved consistency across reports, layouts, and formats.
- ✓ Complete visibility of report status and authorisations.
- ✓ Easier collaboration from one source of truth, no more Teams chaos.
- ✓ Reduced stress for last-minute changes or late reports.
- ✓ Positive feedback from councillors on professionalism of documents.
- ✓ Simple, repeatable workflows for regular reports and annual documents.
- ✓ Improved user experience of documentation with easy navigation and linking.

## Conclusion

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For Grey District Council, Infocouncil hasn't just improved processes, it's changed the way the governance team operates. From implementation to support, the experience has been consistently positive, empowering the Council to work faster, more confidently, and with less stress.

The benefits are clear across the board for council officers, staff, councillors, and even the public engaging with agendas and minutes online. Thanks to Infocouncil, Grey District Council now has a robust, intuitive, and efficient system that supports its vision for modern, transparent, and high-functioning local governance.

Trish and her team now struggle to imagine their roles without the support of Infocouncil and have become strong ambassadors of the solution for neighbouring councils still stuck in 'the old ways.'

**"If I ever moved towns and looked for another job, I wouldn't go to a council that didn't have it."**

- **Trish Jellyman**, Democracy Advisor and EA to the ELT



If your council is still stuck in 'the old ways' it might be time to follow the lead of Trish and her team at GDC and get in touch with Infocouncil for a free demo and experience the 'game-changing' impact Infocouncil can have on your councils operations.

**Book a free consultation**

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