

## Methven Lions eye 4x4 challenge to fill coffers

31 January 2019 - By Mick Jensen - Methven Lions are getting into 4x4 action.

The club wants to plug a big shortfall in its revenue by getting involved with a 4WD winch challenge later this year.

Lion Matt McElwain, speaking to Methven Community Board, said the new event had the potential to be a good earner for the club - and the district.

He said the club had been looking to fill the hole left in the revenue budget by motorcycle street race event Mountain Thunder, which the club had been involved with for a number of years, but was now on hold.

The 4WD winch challenge had come up as a possibility and it was now full steam ahead.

He said Methven Lions would co-ordinate the marketing and publicity around the October 12-14 event and would pocket the gate takings.

The technical side of things would be organised by the national 4WD group and the October challenge would form both a round of the South Island Championships and national championships.

“Like Mountain Thunder, there will be no liability to our club.”

Mr McElwain said a similar event had been held last year at Alford Forest, but that had been deliberately low key and still attracted 250 people.

He said Paul Caldicott's property near Mt Alford had been chosen for the event and the Lions had already allocated a budget of \$3000 for gorse and weed clearing.

“The 4WD people love steep hills, big boulders and the muddier the better,” he said.

He said the sport was raced against the clock and was technical and intricate.

Mr McElwain said the Lions had crunched some rough numbers based on 1000 spectators attending and reckoned the benefit to the community, including accommodation, gate takings and food and drinks was around \$68,000.

He said a successful event was of great benefit to the community because club profits went back to the area, revenue would trickle through to other hospitality businesses and the event would also build up a wider reputation for Methven outside of the ski season.

4WD enthusiasts will also test the local terrain in April when they gather for a treasure hunt event.

The Lions estimate that occasion will generate in excess of \$40,000 for Methven.

Methven Lions are investigating making the 4WD winch event a five year project.

On Monday the club asked Methven Community Board for \$2500 towards promotion and marketing. The board will get back to the club when more information has been received.

A 4WD winch challenge is being brought to the district.

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