

“Councillors, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Guy McIndoe and I am the owner of a local business (Forage Merchants of Wellington) just steps away from the Alicetown Community Centre.

Like others in this room, I was heartbroken to see it lost to fire.

For me, this isn't only the loss of a building, it's the loss of a daily presence that helped hold our neighbourhood together.

Many of my customers were the centre's members, and volunteers - old and young who passed our doors before and after activities.

The centre brought steady, reliable foot traffic that small business depends on, and its absence is already being felt in quieter streets and fewer familiar faces.

But the true value of the community centre can't be measured only in economic terms. It was a place where people who might otherwise be isolated found connection. It was a place of positivity, belonging and sharing.

It provided a focal point that turned a collection of houses into a community.

As a neighbouring business, we saw firsthand how those intangible benefits translated into a stronger, more resilient local economy. When people feel connected to a place, they choose to shop locally, support local services, and look out for one another. The centre was a catalyst for that sense of belonging.

Rebuilding it is not simply replacing what was lost; it is investing in the social infrastructure that keeps neighbourhoods healthy, safe, and economically viable.

I urge you to fund the rebuild so that Alicetown can once again have its gathering place — a space that supports people first, and through that, sustains the businesses that serve them.

Thank you for your consideration and for the work you do for our city.”

