

# COUNCIL NEWS

JUNE 2013



**KNYSNA**  
Municipality

## KNYSNA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL APPROVES 2013/2014 BUDGET

The Knysna Municipality approved the 2013/2014 budget during the Council Meeting of 30 May 2013.

In her annual State of the Town Address, which preceded the tabling of the budget, Mayor Georlene Wolmarans said the budget continued to fight the difficult economic situation the town found itself in.

“Considering the unlikelihood of the economic position changing much in the next three to four budget cycles, at least, the budget follows a conservative approach to rates and tariffs but also slowly begins to plan in anticipation of improved economic conditions from 2017/18,” said Wolmarans.

The new budget, also referred to as the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTREF), amounts to some R608-million of which R76-million is allocated for capital expenditure and R532-million for operating expenditure. This is an increase of 8.4% from the 2012/13 approved budget (R561-million) and 6.1% from the 2012/13 adjusted budget.

### The main budget implications for ratepayers will be:

- Prepaid electricity meters will be introduced to all properties in Knysna over the next three years.
- Arrears will in future be loaded onto the prepaid electricity system.
- Areas in which residents have not paid for services in the past will be levied a Municipal Service Accessibility Charge (MSAC) of R30 a month via the prepaid electricity system from January 2014. The MSAC will be waived if the resident is formally registered on the Knysna Municipality Indigent Register.
- Increase average of 6% tariff for electricity.
- Water tariff increase of 6%.
- Increase of 8% on all sewerage tariffs.
- Refuse tariff increase of 6% for domestic and business consumers.
- Minor tariffs will be increased by 7.5% on average unless otherwise indicated in the tariff book.



- Assessment rates will be increased by 2% for domestic and non-domestic properties.
- Assessment rate rebates will be reduced from 20% to 15%. The domestic rebate will be phased out over the next four budgets.
- A new rate in the rand will be introduced for minor accommodation establishments, which will be set at 4% above the current rate of domestic properties, and will be applicable from 1 July 2013.
- There will be an increase in the first value of property exempted from rates from R65 000 to R100 000.
- The Rural Rebate will be reduced from 30% to 25% and will be phased out over the next few budget years.
- Pensioner rebates will remain the same. They were significantly increased in recent years and the top level is well above the norm.
- The Green Rebate will remain the same for the forthcoming financial year but will be replaced from 1 July 2014 with a Biodiversity Rebate. The object of the Biodiversity Rebate will be to achieve the long term conservation of substantial areas of intact natural eco-systems.
- R200 000 per ward will be made available for the development of capital projects in each ward.

The full Knysna State of the Town Address, including the Budget Speech, is available at <http://www.knysna.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/MTREF-2013-2014-30-May-2013.pdf>

## NEW ROADS PAMPHLET

Have you ever wondered what's up with our roads? The Knysna Municipality has just launched a pamphlet explaining all the issues surrounding the condition of the roads in its municipal area.

The pamphlet describes the realities surrounding budget allocations, how roads are prioritised for maintenance and repair, as well as the rules regarding fixing your own pothole. Yes, you have read correctly, under certain circumstances you may fix your own!

The pamphlet is available at all municipality service centres. It can also be downloaded from [www.knysna.gov.za](http://www.knysna.gov.za) in the Media section (Brochures and Pamphlets) of the Information Centre.



## FEATURING WARD 10: COUNCILLOR RICHARD DAWSON

Few wards see as much activity as Ward 10, as large parts thereof is dedicated to Knysna's business and industrial areas. Up for the challenge is Councillor Richard Dawson who is not only an experienced councillor, but had been part of the corporate world for a very long time before going into politics.

**"I am passionate about Knysna** and committed to assist where possible in these difficult times to restore the town's business community, and to hopefully attract investment and thereby improve the dignity and quality of life to all residents through jobs, improved infrastructure, sound management and prudent expenditure."

Like all other wards in the Knysna Municipal Area, Ward 10 received R200 000 towards capital projects in the 2012/13 financial year. The projects covered in this ward allocation funding included:



### REST ROOM FOR CLEANERS

- A rest room for street cleaners who had until recently stored their belongings in an unlit and un-electrified corner of a building. The cleaners also had no dedicated place to sit or eat. Their new hut, situated in a corner at the main taxi rank, provides lockers for the workers as well as seating and a small kitchen area.
- Toilet facilities at the taxi rank, which had been damaged and were unhygienic, are currently being repaired and upgraded.



### TAXI RANK TOILETS

- A need for additional street lighting in Gray Street, from the Main Street corner down, was identified as priority to improve safety and security at night for visitors to the town centre. A few extra lights have already been installed and more is planned when the 2013/14 ward allocation funds become available.



### STREET LIGHTS

- Council will also be planting well-established, indigenous trees in the CBD where old trees had been removed for various reasons.

One of the main issues in Ward 10 relates to the condition of roads. **"The roads in my ward arguably take the most traffic in Knysna**, which includes many heavy vehicles. The quantity and weight of vehicles are contributing factors to the damage of roads, which is frustrating to all concerned but unavoidable. The municipality attends to roads according to a priority list and in accordance with budget availability. Fortunately, many of the roads in Ward 10 are in fact on that priority list because of the amount of traffic it takes. In addition to the repairs schedule, some of the ward-based allocation funds for Ward 10 have gone towards fixing more potholes in the CBD, but maintaining roads is very expensive and funding very limited," said Mr Dawson.

The municipality recently published a pamphlet explaining the issues surrounding the condition of our roads. More details are available elsewhere in this newsletter.

The 30th annual Knysna Oyster Festival will take place from 28 June to 7 July, and the main festival venue will once again be located in this ward. Councillor Dawson said that having the festival hub in Ward 10 would once again be a welcome economic boost as people visited shops, businesses and restaurants. "I urge all our residents to allow themselves to be swept up in the excitement of the festival, to welcome our visitors with warm, open hearts and to please be patient with the cyclists and runners – and the traffic. Our Traffic and Law Enforcement officers will once again ensure that everything flows as well as it possibly can, with the least impact on day-to-day movements."

Contact Councillor Dawson on 044 302 6353 or 079 4379 797 or rdawson@knysna.gov.za.

## NEW DIRECTOR TECHNICAL SERVICES



The Knysna Municipality welcomes its new Director Technical Services, Mr Michael Rhode, who took up his new position on 3 June 2013.

Knysna Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said Mr Rhode's extensive experience as engineer in local government, combined with strong leadership skills, were exactly what the municipality required in its Technical Services Directorate. "This department is core to very important infrastructure service delivery such as water, sewerage and roads. These are areas where strong leadership and high technical ability are essential. We look forward to the difference Mr Rhode can make in this department."

Originally from Cape Town, Michael J Rhode has an Electrical Engineering Degree from the University of Stellenbosch. He is also a Certified Energy Manager, Certified Measurements and Verification Professional and holds a Government Certificate of Competency. He has served as Director: Logistics for the City of Cape Town, Director: Electrical Services in George and Director: Technical Services in Stellenbosch. Before he joined the Knysna Municipality, he headed the Electrical Services unit at Drakenstein Municipality.

## WATCH OUT FOR OPEN MANHOLES

Increasing theft of manhole and stormwater covers in Knysna has prompted the Knysna Municipality to issue a warning to residents to take care on roads and sidewalks.

Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said a spate of thefts of cast iron covers had left several holes open, posing a risk of injury to road users. "Manholes can be as deep as eight metres and we ask locals to watch where they walk and drive. The holes can be situated in the street, on sidewalks or on road reserves and servitudes.

"While we re-cover and/or place warning tape and beacons up as soon as we can, we cannot always get to the open holes soon enough – there are nearly 10 000 service holes in Knysna including stormwater drains, sewerage access points and other covered service holes for stormwater and sewerage maintenance purposes," she said.

Ms Waring said the cast iron covers were stolen and resold to scrap yards. The thefts are suspected to be made by syndicates from out of town, and don't seem to be sold locally. "The cost of continued replacement of cast iron covers is significant. A round cast iron manhole cover and frame set costs R775 and the 450mm X 600mm cast iron cover and frame totals R1003. While the municipality is ensured against theft, that too has a cost implication and cannot continue like that. One of the measures the municipality is putting in place, is replacing the stolen covers with polymer concrete covers, which obviously don't hold any appeal for scrap metal thieves."

Mr Rhode is the Immediate Past President of the Association of Municipal Electrical Utilities (AMEU), a board member of the Power Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa (PIESA) and founder member of the South African Smart Grid Initiative (SASGI). He is also the current President Elect of the Southern Africa Revenue Protection Association (SARPA) and is due to be inaugurated as President at its annual conference in July 2013.

Mr Rhode said he enjoyed serving the communities of South Africa and providing services in an efficient and effective manner. "I believe that best practices should be employed and I intend applying my skills and knowledge towards turning Knysna into a world class town that will be an example for other municipalities to follow.

**"Together with the rest of the management team, I am determined to provide affordable quality services, alleviate poverty, and facilitate social and economic development in the Greater Knysna Municipal Area through integrated development planning, skills development and the sustainable use of resources"** said Mr Rhode.

Mr Rhode is married to Michelle and has three children – two at university and one in Primary School.



**THEFT OF MANHOLE COVERS SUCH AS THIS HAS INCREASED OVER THE PAST MONTH. PEDESTRIANS AND MOTORISTS ARE WARNED TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT AND REPORT ANY UNCOVERED MANHOLES.**

Ms Waring asked that residents report any open manholes, stormwater drain grids and other service holes so that they could be covered as soon as possible. "We also ask that residents keep an eye out for suspicious activity around service hole covers and report it to the municipality immediately by phoning 044 302 1601 during office hours and 044 302 8911 after hours.

"We have also had an increase of theft of batteries and petrol from sewerage and water pump stations. Persons living and working in the vicinity of pump houses are especially asked to report suspicious activity or people hanging around for no apparent reason.

"The municipality cannot be everywhere all the time, and the community's assistance in reducing theft of public property will be greatly appreciated," she said.

## SUPPORTING PROMISING SAILORS

The Knysna Municipality has donated just under R10 000 towards the travelling costs of two local development sailors who have been selected to represent South Africa at the RS Tera Sailing World Championships in Weymouth in the United Kingdom in July.

Wanga Mbabe, aged 17, and Bhekumuzi Hani, aged 16, who are learners at Percy Mdala and Concordia High Schools respectively, were commended for their hard work and dedication at a Council meeting on 30 May 2013.

Handing over a check of R9 995-00, Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans said the boys had been working very hard to not only perform in their sailing but also to raise the necessary funds. **“For them to be able to go and compete overseas, they have to raise R100 000 to cover all their expenses.** The Knysna Municipal Council today adds a financial contribution to this cause and wishes you success in your future endeavours in sailing and in life. We know that you will be excellent representatives of Knysna and that, when you return, you will share your newly acquired life experience to the benefit of all you come in contact with,” said Wolmarans.

The boys will be accompanied by their coach Mike Pogodin of Knysna Yacht Club.



KNYSNA EXECUTIVE MAYOR GEORLENE WOLMARANS HANDS OVER A CHECK OF R9 995-00 TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT SAILORS BHEKUMUZI HANI, AGED 16 (LEFT), AND WANGA MBABE, AGED 17.

PICTURE: DESMOND SCHOLTZ

Persons wanting to donate towards the development sailors' trip can contact the Knysna Yacht Club or Andrew Finn at +27 (0)82 5564 604.

## THANK YOU BARGAIN BOOKS AND BOOK BUYERS

The Knysna Library has received several brand new books and audio books, which customers of Bargain Books bought at reduced prices to supplement the town's stock. Especially welcome was the collection of children's books. "Our libraries have become increasingly important to our local school children who use the facilities as a place to do their homework and school projects. Every book has the potential of helping hundreds of school children towards a better future. The municipality thanks Bargain Books for offering books at reduced prices as well as every person who bought a book for our libraries," said Municipal Manager Lauren Waring.

Pictured here is Knysna Head Librarian Deanna van Heerden with some of the books received in this effort.



## NEW VENTURE CREATION PROGRAMME

Twenty potential entrepreneurs have recently started attending a new Venture Creation Programme that will assist them in starting their own businesses. The year-long learnership is locally coordinated by African Development Group and funded by the Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority (CATHSETA).

The Economic Development unit of the Knysna Municipality has assisted in identifying 20 unemployed youths from Sedgfield, Karatara and Rheenendal to take part in the programme, which will train them in business skills and assist them with drawing up business plans and applying for funding. The municipality also provides some of the training venues.

