

Knysna season described as 'best in years'

With the positive feedback that was received from visitors, residents, businesses and the tourism sector it is clear that Knysna had one of the most successful seasons in years.



Acting Municipal Manager Bevan Ellman said Law Enforcement and Community Services deserve a feather in their caps and thanked the SAPD, NSRI and the Provincial Traffic Department for their support. "I want to thank permanent and seasonal staff for their contribution and hard work at the busiest time of the year in Knysna. We also had fantastic co-operation from the holidaymakers and generally visitors and residents 'played' within the rules."

Mr Ellman said that the municipality mourns the unnecessary deaths that made this a bleak season for some families. "The tragic drowning of four children at the beginning of the holiday devastated Knysna residents. We will assess these areas where regular incidents occur and do what we can to safeguard the facilities. At the same time the road death toll became a harsh reality as it affected a number of residents in the area and our thoughts were with these families throughout the festive season."

Service delivery departments operated at peak capacity, and additional staff was appointed where necessary.

- The Fire Department responded to 71 fire calls ranging from homes to bush fires.
- The medical vehicle supported by Lions Club at Sedgefield Fire Station responded to 20 medical incidents during season, ranging from a motor vehicle accident to assault.
- Twenty-two Voluntary Point Duty officials were appointed to control all major intersections in the CBD's. Road blocks were held in conjunction with the SAPD and the Provincial Traffic Department for unroadworthy vehicles and driving under the influence.
- The Solid Waste Management Department functioned throughout the holiday period with only Christmas and New Year's Day that services were not rendered.
- Life Savers were on duty at all major beaches within the greater Knysna area which includes Knoetzie, Leisure Island, Brenton-on-Sea, Buffalo Bay, Myoli Beach, Sedgefield Mouth, Swartvlei and the Karatara Swimming Pool.
- An additional forty Law Enforcement officials were appointed to assist in the CBD's, on beaches and hotspots such as the taxi rank, ensuring visible policing on all public beaches and the law that prohibits alcohol use on beaches was strictly enforced. Although there were minor incidents the public generally behaved.
- Additional staff was appointed to ensure that the CBD's, beaches and recreational facilities were kept clean."

Mr Ellman concluded to say that although there would always be areas where they could improve on, they were happy with the way the municipal staff handled the annual influx of visitors.

IN THIS ISSUE



- CLLR IRENE GROOTBOOM
- MUNICIPALITY'S HIGHLIGHTS
- INTRODUCING MAWETHU PENXA
- WATERWISE TIPS
- 2014 ELECTIONS COMING UP

Featuring Ward One - Cllr Irene Grootboom

(Smutsville, Sizamile, Myoli Beach, The Island and Rondevlei)

Councillor Irene Grootboom is a born and bred Smutsville resident. "Sedgefield lies close to my heart and being committed to positive change here comes naturally. My family has always been my priority and I am happy that since I've been elected as Ward Councillor, I now have an extended family – the Sedgefield community. They are my mothers and fathers, my grandparents and my children; I care for each and everyone as if they were my own."



Councillor Irene Grootboom at Myoli Beach.

She said that job creation and inspiring the youth is her main goal. "We have to create more opportunities for them. They need to be exposed to more possibilities and a wider variety of career choice. Entrepreneurship is essential in the current economic climate and I am working closely with the municipality's Youth Advisory programme to assist us with this empowerment process."

Cllr. Grootboom said she is proud to be part of the Sedgefield community. "We stand together. This was once again demonstrated when six homes in Smutsville were destroyed by a fire just before Christmas. Local business and people from all walks of life opened their hearts and provided these destitute families not only with a roof over their heads, but also clothes, food for the table and something special for Christmas."

"My initial reluctance to join local government has changed into gratitude. The overwhelming support I received thus far has helped me to realise there is so much more to be done and that, with the support and co-operation of this community, we can make it happen."



The Smutsville play park was officially opened December 2013.

She will also be focusing on forming a women's empowerment group where issues can be addressed and where they can find support from other members. "We have to work together to combat the breakdown of morals and values in our communities. We must be the driving force to change this, and an example for other women of what can be done. Teenage pregnancies and the abuse of alcohol are destroying our children's future. We, as women, must find ways to support each other and guide our children."

Cllr. Grootboom said there is a lot to look forward to in Ward one. "The Ward Allocation for 2013/14 will ensure adequate beach access to Sedgefield river mouth and the construction of a look-out at Myoli beach parking area will be completed before June 2014. The ward allocation for the current financial year was used to create a play park that was officially opened by the Executive Mayor in December 2013. The pedestrian crossing and speed bumps in Fynbos lane, David Culley and Milkwood lane have improved road safety considerably."

The community, and especially the children, have been exposed to the benefits of recycling by the Swop Shop initiative in Smutsville. "This created new opportunities for the children, and we plan to extend this venture to include adults as well," said Grootboom. "I am also excited about the first phase of the under roof multi-purpose facility in Smutsville that will start soon. This, and the upgrade of the sport fields, will add tremendously to the quality of life of the residents."

Message from the Mayor

"2014 will be a highlight on the calendar!"



As we start the New Year it is a time to re-asses the year past and I think there is so much for Knysna to be proud of! We've had numerous successful events, including a fantastic Oyster Festival and summer holiday season. These events and achievements are due to the hard work, commitment and determination of organisers, volunteers and businesses that make them happen. To them, thank you, from all of Knysna.

2014 will hopefully not only follow in the footsteps of the previous year, but is bound to provide some of its own highlights. To start with – this is an election year! We celebrate 20 years of democracy and we urge everyone to vote and make your voice heard.

My hope for 2014 is that we will, through hard work and commitment, look back

at the end of the year and say that we have really made a difference where it matters most. More importantly, that we worked together as a community to bring these changes about. With the country's sad farewell to Nelson Mandela still so fresh in our minds one of his most used quotes comes to mind: "It always seems impossible until it's done". Let this be our motto this year.

Let us support our businesses so that they can flourish and create jobs.

Let us support our youth to live healthy and purposeful lives by acknowledging their worth and celebrating their uniqueness.

Let us reach out to the elderly and tap in to their wisdom and experience so that we can accelerate our growth as a



community.

Let us be the change we want to see this year.

Executive Mayor, Georlene Wolmarans

Knysna Municipality's highlights 2012/2013



- Good corporate governance and sound financial management resulted in Knysna Municipality receiving a clean audit for the 2012/13 financial period.
- The Integrated Strategic Development Framework (ISDF) process, which promises to change the face of the greater Knysna over the next 20 to 30 years, was launched.
- Four new Directors in the Departments of Planning and Development, Corporate Services, Technical Services and Community Services were appointed.
- The Knysna Municipal Public Accounts Committee was appointed.
- Electricity infrastructure was installed, including new intake sub stations, new transformers, fibre optic cables and hundreds of new electrical connections to homes and businesses.
- Several water projects have commenced and the Karatara River Weir as opened. The master planning of the total water reticulation system took place and the Rheendal Water Augmentation Project, as well as a crucial water pipeline to the Northern Areas, was completed.
- The upgraded Waste Water Treatment Works were launched.
- Roads and sidewalks were upgraded and constructed in the Northern areas as well as the greater Knysna area.
- Sedgefield's first proper taxi rank was opened in June 2013.
- Guard rails, wheelchair ramps and retaining walls were constructed in disadvantaged communities throughout the municipal area.
- Play parks were established throughout the municipal area.
- Nine high mast area lights were installed and another four is on its way.
- Hundreds of toilets were installed and the upgrade of several pump stations took place.
- 294 low cost houses were completed and 320 new slabs have been cast. A further 300 properties were connected to services.
- The first projects in the on-going Lagoon Action Plan were implemented.
- Two Blue Flag Beaches: Buffalo Bay and Brenton-On-Sea.



Interview with the new Manager: Integrated Human Settlements, Mawethu Penxa

"I'm not in the business of building houses. Bricks and mortar is overrated. I'm building integrated and sustainable communities with people as the building blocks and respect the foundation."

These are the words Mawethu Penxa used to describe his vocation for the last 19 years of his life, that of managing housing departments.



WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

I was a history and language teacher before I started to work in local government, which I think is where I really belonged! I started at Beaufort-West Municipality all those years ago and consequently worked at the City of Tygerberg in Cape Town, Stellenbosch Municipality, the farming communities of Theewaterskloof and Bergvrievier on the West Coast.

IN A NUTSHELL, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF?

I am fluent in four languages, Afrikaans, English, Xhosa and seSotho; the youngest of seven siblings; a teacher, husband and father, but to my core a community man. Which is maybe why I am so at home in the Housing Department!

19 YEARS IS A LONG TIME, HAVE YOU NEVER BEEN INTERESTED TO MOVE TO ANOTHER SECTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

It is a fantastic experience to see the concrete results. The tears of joy when we hand over those keys are real, it brings hope and happiness to people that lost hope of a better, secure, and dignified life. The keys literally open up a variety of avenues to a better future. Where can you find a more rewarding job than that?

Also, if the job is done well it makes an immediate difference – a sustainable impact. A house is more than safety. A house makes you part of a community, a social structure, restores dignity and gives you a place where you belong.

WHY THE DECISION TO MOVE TO KNYSNA?

This is one of the best municipalities in the country. It has a stable administration, as proven again with its clean audit, well-managed by professional and experienced people. Here I have all the resources at my disposal to do my work to the best of my ability.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?

I am an avid reader and am reading "Good to Great" by Jim Collins at the moment. I'm here to add value to this community and this administration, it is a good place to be, but I would like to transform it from good to great.

WHO IS YOUR ROLE MODEL?

My father left me a legacy and is the reason why I am who I am today. He was a long distance train sweeper. My mom was a domestic help. They both had no education. Today every one of their seven children is educated. Four of us are teachers, two of us in local government and one has his own consulting company. My dad taught us to respect all people. He taught us to take responsibility for our lives, work hard and to always be humble and grateful."

WHAT WILL BE YOUR IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS?

Communication - an informed community is an empowered community. Everyone in the Department must be part of the process, including project managers and technical teams.

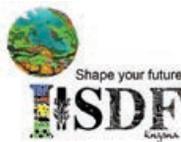
We will also work towards creating partnerships with all role-players within the human settlement implementation value chain and internally with all relevant departments. Our clients are the same. We have a shared vision and we have to work together and understand the impact of one missing link in the value chain of service delivery.

We are currently updating our waiting list to adequately address community frustrations with regards to housing allocations. It is important that the criteria are made clear. With policies and systems in place, we will make positive headway.

We have to ensure that our housing plans are linked with the ISDF's thirty year vision that is now in the process of being developed and that the five year housing pipeline/plan is executed with the long term plan in mind.

Everyone in this department will get the necessary support to develop skills to effectively and passionately work towards our common goal.

The challenge to speed up housing transfers is being addressed."



Changing the face of Knysna

South Africa's first Integrated Strategic Development Framework (ISDF) was initiated September

2013 to ensure better coordination between the municipality's different strategic plans including the Human Settlement Plan, Spatial Development Framework, Environmental Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

Please register as an interested or affected party. Fill in a form at a library near you or click the 'register' link in the ISDF section on the homepage of the municipality website: www.knysna.gov.za

For more information contact Knysna's Manager Economic Development Ilze van Schalkwyk:

044 302 1646 or ivanschalkwyk@knysna.gov.za

or the facilitators Knysna Creative Heads:

044 382 6732 or info@knysnacreativeheads.co.za

2014 National and Provincial Elections

REGISTER TO VOTE: If you are not registered, you cannot vote in the 2014 National and Provincial elections.

You can register at the IEC offices in Knysna. Take your green ID book with you!

The IEC office in Knysna is in St George's Street. The office is open every weekday from 8am to 5pm. There office phone number is 044 382 3608.

If you need more information visit www.elections.org.za or toll free: 0800 11 8000 every weekday between 8pm and 5am.

Be Waterwise

While the Garden Route has had good rains over the past few months, the main sources of water in the Knysna Municipal area are rivers, and are therefore always vulnerable. Municipal water restrictions remain in place:

- Even street numbers 6pm-7pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- Odd street numbers 6pm to 7pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Municipal water leaks can be reported to 044 302 1601.

You can conserve water by:

Taking shorter showers, five minutes or less is best.

Placing a bucket in the shower to catch excess water and use this to water plants.

Turning off the tap when soaping hands or brushing teeth.

Never pouring water down the drain when there may be another use for it such as watering a plant.

Replacing or adjusting the toilet handle if it frequently gets stuck in the flush position, allowing water to run constantly.