



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Blue Flag season officially launched**

The Knysna Municipality officially launched the holiday Blue Flag beach season at Brenton-on-Sea and Buffels Bay on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November.

A special flag hoisting ceremony was held at Brenton-on-Sea attended by Knysna Executive Mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies, municipal officials, representatives from the Wildlife Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA), South African National Parks (SANParks), Brenton Ratepayers Association and residents.

Bouw-Spies said Blue Flag status at local beaches is a great achievement: “It is a major boost for tourism, economic development and job creation. Acquiring the status requires hard work from our side, and needs the buy-in and input of a variety of stakeholders to work together as a collective.”

“Environmental management and education are some of the key elements to achieve and maintain Blue Flag status. A big thank you to the WESSA team, SANParks, Brenton and Buffels Bay residents and our Environmental team, Pam Booth and Joclyn Fearon for all their hard work. Greater Knysna is rising and will continue to rise if we keep on working together,” said Bouw-Spies.

Judy Harrison from the Brenton Ratepayers Committee, said Blue Flag status keeps our beaches clean and safe for everyone to enjoy. “We are looking forward to a great holiday season. Dogs may also enjoy these beautiful beaches before 09:00 and after 17:00, provided that they are kept on their leashes at all times”.

The Mayor then hoisted the official flags, first at Brenton-on-Sea and then at Buffalo Bay where they will fly high until the end of the official summer season on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2018.

South Africa has participated in the Blue Flag programme since 2001. It is an international coastal management accreditation programme for beaches that meet standards of excellence in water quality, environmental management, environmental education and information as well as safety and services. The programme offers many

benefits, including improved tourism facilities, enhanced management of coastal ecosystems, capacity building of coastal municipalities and increased awareness in general.

In South Africa the programme is implemented by the Wildlife Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA).

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