Dear residents

As April rings in the second quarter of 2019, we welcome Dr Sitembele Wiseman Vatala, who took office as Knysna’s Municipal Manager on the first of this month. Having come home to Knysna, I trust that he will soon feel at home within the administration. I look forward to working with Dr Vatala and the administration in serving the people of Knysna.

Our 2019/2020 Draft Budget is now available for public scrutiny and comment. Proposed tariff increases have been limited, as service delivery must be weighed against affordability. I believe that this draft budget will allow us to provide the much-needed economic infrastructure to facilitate local economic growth. I urge all residents to have their say in this very important matter.

Of course April is Freedom Month, with Freedom Day being celebrated on the 27th. The 8th of May will see the twenty-fifth opportunity for all South Africans to exercise their right to vote. While it is our right to vote, it is also our responsibility to do so with integrity – to make an educated decision for the betterment of the country.

The end of March saw a very dark time in Knysna. Every person has the right to stage a legal and peaceful protest, but not the right to seriously disrupt traffic, cause injury or damage to property. We have many channels in place that allow for easy, effective communication that are open to any member of the public. I now make a very serious plea to all future protestors:

Please keep to the laws regulating public protests.

Causing chaos only dilutes your message and will result in arrests being made. Keep it peaceful. Peace is a precious commodity in our country, one we have only achieved through many years of struggle.

Speaking of peace, Easter is upon us. Even if you do not celebrate it as a religious commoration, it is still a time for families to spend together – in peace. Enjoy this time of spiritual reflection with your family, as I shall be doing with mine.

‘Til next month...

Mark Willemse,
Executive Mayor
Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse tabled the draft 2019/2020 Budget at the council meeting of 28 March 2019. Council resolved to approve the draft budget and it is now open for public comment.

Willemse said “... the 2019/20 Draft Budget focuses on balancing municipal finances, managing risk and maintaining fiscal stability in a weak economic environment. It will give effect to our strategic objectives, the Integrated Development Plan and the National Development Plan. This Draft Budget seeks a balance between:

- potential growth limited by the resource constraints of the current economic outlook; and
- lifting these constraints by strengthening good governance, limiting growth in general expenditure and investing in infrastructure and our local people.

The provision of economic infrastructure is a necessary condition for economic growth in Greater Knysna.”

The draft 2019/2020 budget amounts to approximately R1,132,864,000 comprising of R208,625,000 in capital expenditures and R924,239,000 for operating expenses. Revenue sources remain under strain. To balance service delivery with affordability, proposed tariff increases have been limited as follows:

- Property rates: between 2.5% and 4.2%, household dependent
- Water services: 5.5%
- Sewerage charges: 4%
- Electricity services: 9%
- Refuse removal: 9.5%

The public may comment on the content of the draft document until 16h30 on Monday 20 May 2019. Submissions should be posted to the Municipal Manager at PO Box 21 Knysna, or emailed to budget@knysna.gov.za.


The budget public meeting schedule is available on page 3 of this edition and will also be advertised in the local media and our social media pages.

**How do I read my water management device?**

1 = Battery life indicator
2 = Valve status: visible droplet - valve is open
droplet not visible - valve is closed
3 = Total consumption

**Advantages of your water management device.**

- You control your monthly water usage.
- You control your water billing.
- You are notified of water leakages, so you do not lose water that you are charged for.

**Do not tamper with the smart water meter!**

- It is illegal to tamper with the device.
- The meter will shut down if tampered with.
- Shutdown will interrupt your water services.
- You will be without water until the meter can be fixed.
Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse awarded R1.3 million to 74 local charitable organisations on Wednesday 13 March.

Willemse said “The Grant-In-Aid handover is one of my favourite mayoral duties as communities benefit directly from this programme. The committee visited some of the applicants. It was an emotional experience, witnessing the effect that hard-working people have in other people's lives - with very little resources and often receiving nothing in return, except for knowing that they have made a difference.”

Applications for the annual GIA programme are evaluated by a committee appointed by council, including the Executive Mayor and four other councillors.

Funds are allocated based on criteria such as the size and nature of the organisation and the purpose of funds. The Non-Profit-Organisations must be registered with the correct and relevant department and/or association. The final list of beneficiaries is submitted to and approved by Council.

“We thank these organisations for their work. Many work on a voluntary basis without recognition for the important role they play in developing our communities. We commend you all. Many thanks to the team that ensures that the GIA programme is a success,” Willemse concluded.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much does it cost to have a water meter installed?
There is no cost at present. Council may resolve to charge for future installations.

How & where do I apply for a water meter?
Visit the Technical Services Directorate at No. 3 Old Main Road Building, Church Street, Knysna or phone 044 302 6331. You may also contact your ward councillor.

Who are indigent consumers?
Residents with a gross household income not exceeding R5100 per month.

Can anyone apply to have a meter installed?
(continue overleaf...)
Yes, any household, in all wards may apply to have the meter installed.

**How much free water do households get per month?**
Indigent consumers receive 6 kilolitres per month. You will not lose your free monthly allocation.

**After I have used up my 6 kilolitres, how much will I pay for a litre of water?**
This will be according to the Council approved tariff structure.

**Will there be a daily limit on the 6 kilolitres free water per month?**
The water management devices can be programmed to provide a daily allotment. However, there is no limit at this stage in time, the Council must still take a decision in this regard.

**What is the minimum amount I can buy?**
There is no limit on the amount of water you can buy.

**Where can I buy prepaid water units?**
Wherever prepaid electricity is sold.

**Does the meter use electricity?**
No, the device has a battery. The expected battery life is between 5 and 15 years. The device will transmit a low battery message if the battery is low and needs replacement. The current cost of replacing these batteries is relatively low.