Dear residents

You should, by now, be aware of our ongoing rehabilitation of Knysna CBD’s water network. We have recently completed works on the Charlesford Scheme and almost doubled pumping capacity from the Knysna River. This has delivered nearly immediate results, with our main storage dam now at 90% capacity. While this does not mean that we can start to use water irresponsibly, it does provide Greater Knysna with far greater security of water supply than at any other time in history.

Now we are busy with the next, vitally important phase: replacing the old pipes with new UPVC pipes. We have suffered many pipe breaks in the past due to aging infrastructure. The new pipes will not only address pressure management issues but are more tolerant to the soil conditions, consequently reducing the probability of future pipe breaks.

Obviously, sections of certain roads have had to be dug up so that the pipes may be replaced. This has had an impact on traffic flow, and we appreciate your patience in this regard. But we ask for an extension of your patience, as we are also ready to start connecting the new pipes to the network. This will necessitate interruptions to the water supply. It is, however, a means to an end. A few months’ discomfort that leads to better water supply and newly resurfaced roads - two things that you have asked us to provide.

We know of the interruptions already experienced this week, and advise you that the following streets will be affected:

- Green Street on Thursday 22 August;
- Hedge Street on Tuesday 27 August;
- Trotter Street on Wednesday 28 August; and
- Long Street on Thursday 29 August.

Please contact our Water Department at 044 302 6331 with any emergencies.

We have opened invitations to apply for a Grant-in-Aid (GIA) during the 2019/2020 financial year. Council will consider applications from organisations and bodies from outside the sphere of government that adhere to specific and strict criteria and are community- or welfare based. Applications are subject to the conditions of the GIA Policy and, because of limited funds, cannot unfortunately be made to every applicant. An information session regarding the policy, application and potential eligibility will be held on Friday 23 August at 12:00 in the Committee Room at our Corporate Building, 5 Clyde Street. The policy document and application forms are available at www.knysna.gov.za, or from Ms S Mtwa at 044 302 6346 or smtwa@knysna.gov.za. Applications must reach the Municipal Manager at PO Box 21, Knysna, 6570 or knysna@knysna.gov.za by 27 September 2019.

Our Youth Desk is running a Women’s Sport Development Program. This initiative presents ladies with the opportunity to learn and practise new and favourite sports. The latest event will be an exciting Spring Tournament. For more information or to enter your team, please contact our Youth Desk at 044 302 6442 or ssigula@knysna.gov.za.

Spring is here and you’ll notice verges being cleared, grass mowed, trees felled and more. We contracted 30 small business entrepreneurs to perform this maintenance and it is expected that a total of 140 jobs will be created through this project.

The Spring Equinox takes place on 23 September this year. This is when the northern and southern hemispheres share an equally long day and night, and when many people see as the first day of Spring. This atmosphere of a new beginning is very fitting as Heritage Day is celebrated on the very next day, 24 September. Not only do I wish you all a fun and delicious Braai Day, I wish that we all undertake a new beginning of truly trying to understand each other’s cultures and beliefs. It’s our combined heritage that makes us South African, and I appreciate that.

‘til next month …

MARK WILLEMSE | EXECUTIVE MAYOR
Although a function of National and Provincial Government, providing access to housing remains one of Knysna Municipality’s main concerns. According to Executive Mayor Mark Willemse a total of 447 houses were built during the 2018/2019 financial year, while 200 serviced sites and 454 slabs were provided to qualifying residents.

2018/20919 FINANCIAL YEAR

“We also handed over 40 houses in Happy Valley and 11 title deeds in Karatara during this time,” said Willemse. “These fantastic results are a testament to our commitment to providing housing to our residents, some of whom have been on waiting lists for many years.” The houses, serviced sites and slabs were provided throughout Bloemfontein, Qolweni, Ethembeni, Flenters, Hlalani, Dam-se-bos, Concordia, Nekkies and Oupad.

Knysna Municipality was recognised at the prestigious Govan Mbeki Housing Awards again this year. It attained second place in the Best Upgrading of Informal Settlements Program category for its Witlokasie Project. “This is the seventh time that our commitment to providing housing has been recognised and lauded by this seminal awards program,” said Willemse.

CURRENT PROJECTS

“Moving forward on these successes, our Directorate of Integrated Human Settlements is building on a three-year delivery plan,” Willemse said. “Housing remains an ongoing concern and we have long-term strategies in place. This plan aims to deliver homes in the short-term.”

This plan will see a further 100 serviced sites and another 460 houses constructed during the 2019/2020 financial year. “We will continue to work in the areas where we gained traction last year,” he continued. “This financial year will also see homes built in Hornlee and Rheenendal, with serviced sites laid out in Sedgefield. Happy Valley and Witlokasie will also see benefits from this plan during this year.”

According to the three-year delivery plan, the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 financial years will see a combined total of 714
serviced sites and 448 houses delivered throughout all these areas, as well as Rhobololo, Bongani, Joodsekamp, Khayalethu, Smutsville and Sizamile.

Already in development, a five to 10-year delivery plan will be responsive to the needs of communities and various stakeholders. It will be based on a typology-driven model that includes diverse housing products, like:

- Breaking New Ground (BNG);
- Contractor Built People’s Housing Process (PHP);
- Interim Services Support Programme (ISSP); and
- Social Housing and Public Rental Opportunities.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING HOUSES?

Schedule 4 of the Constitution of South Africa states that housing is a function of National and Provincial Governments. “The reality is that providing housing is not the responsibility of Local Government,” Willemse explained. “We merely act as an agent on behalf of the state.”

“Housing is only one example of functions expected of municipalities, but which are not specified or allocated to them in the Constitution,” he continued. “We have become the implementing agency for the roll-out of housing projects and do so under continuous uncertainty regarding funding. This places even more stress on our already strained resources.”

“While providing housing might not be a key function of Local Government, the onus of providing services like water, electricity and roads remains with the municipality.”

FUNDING

Finance for housing development is provided by National Government Agencies like the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA) and the National Housing Finance Council (NHFC) through Provincial Government. Municipalities are responsible for the implementation of housing projects but, because of the resources required, this is referred to as an unfunded mandate. These are mandates where certain functions are performed without a clear source of funds.

“The Western Cape Government’s Department of Human Settlements (WCDOHS) and Knysna Municipality itself will be funding the projects contained in the three-year delivery plan,” Willemse explained. “We meet with the WCDOHS on an ongoing basis to evaluate progress and funding required. Funding is rolled over, expunged or transferred dependent on the progress made per project.”

The three-year delivery plan envisages a total spend of R 164,730 million, with R 69.4 million being spent during 2019/2020.

“We are also examining ways to encourage private and public funding through investment in our housing programmes,” he continued. “Our Strategic Integrated Human Settlement Plan aims to present potential investors with a number of options and a variety of typologies. Still in its draft phase, the final plan suggests different models on which to base housing delivery programs and will be pivotal in addressing long-term socio-economic integration.”

CHALLENGES AND A CALL ON RESIDENTS

“Our biggest challenge is the frustration of residents who are still waiting for houses, or those who feel that less deserving candidates received access to housing before they did,” he said. “Providing access to adequate housing to our residents is a Constitutional right according to Section 26 of the Constitution of South Africa, but I can only repeat that this is a function of National and Provincial Government – not of Knysna Municipality.”

“As such, I desperately call on residents not to vent their anger regarding this issue in such a way that it infringes on the rights of others or puts others and their property in danger. I know that you are frustrated and angry, but this is a function of National and Provincial Government. Demonstrations and protests at a local level only lead to disruption, vandalism and violence. It cannot lead to more houses.”

“But providing housing faces a number of challenges on a national scale,” Willemse went on to say. “I think it is fair to say that national, provincial and local governments have all taken great steps in addressing this function, regardless of the inherent challenges.”

According to Willemse, historic ideologies, procedures and programs are a major factor. “This is true across the country, but especially so in Knysna, where we have the third largest concentration of informal settlements. There are, of course, other factors that bring their own hampering effects.”

Two big problems Knysna faces when it comes to providing housing are the high level of mobility towards Knysna and the town’s typography. “The Western Cape is seeing an influx of daily new arrivals,” Willemse explained. “In Knysna our already extensive waiting list for housing is growing by a staggering 3% per year. Couple that with the steep hills and valleys of
Greater Knysna and the issue of uncertain funding, and the reality of the situation soon becomes clear.

“Yet, we remain undaunted! Our previous success and our commitment to our residents motivate us to deliver on our promises - despite the challenges we might face,” Willemse concluded. “Making good on the Constitution’s promise of access to adequate housing is a long-term, ongoing process. And our day-to-day victories in this regard ensure that we can all enjoy living in an inspired, innovative and inclusive Knysna.”

**THANK YOU FOR GIVING WITH A “GREAT HEART” ON MADIBA DAY**

In celebration of Madiba’s birthday and the spirit of Ubuntu, municipal staff and business partners participated in several activities dedicated to those in need on and around 18 July.

Thanks to the generosity of Cape Island Homes, Bukho Construction and Nyameko Trading, construction started on three Breaking New Ground (BNG) housing units in Smutsville, Karatara and Nekkies.

The municipality’s technical services directorate chose to align their 67 minutes with one of our core business functions: by fixing potholes. Senior managers and other technical staff were out in Sedgefield, George Rex Drive and Wards 6 and 11.

Our Fire Department, Correctional Services Department, South African Police Service and other stakeholders conducted a house numbering drive in Hornlee, highlighting the importance of house numbers especially in an emergency.

The Planning & Development staff gave the Rheenendal Community Vegetable Garden much-needed attention by replenishing the soil and planting new seedlings.

**Level 1 water restrictions now apply**

- for the watering of gardens for one hour three days a week;
- for the use of hosepipes for gardening and other purposes, and the use of irrigation systems from 18h00 to 19h00 during December to May (summer) and 17h00 to 18h00 during June to November (winter) as follows:
  - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays – residents with even street numbers;
  - Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays – residents with odd street numbers; and
  - That residents still obtain permission from the Director: Technical Services before filling swimming pools and undertaking maintenance.

Report water leaks and water abuse to 044 302 6331 (o/h) or 060 998 7000.

**Days to remember**

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<td>SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING</td>
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