R630 000 TO 40 LOCAL CHARITIES

The Knysna Municipality recently (13 March 2013) handed over cheques to the value of R630 000 to 40 charities, schools, sport clubs and non-profitable organisations that operate in its municipal area.

Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans said the municipality’s Grant in Aid Programme had been donating funds to worthy, registered organisations since the 2007/8 financial year. “One of the best things about being mayor is to be part of programmes such as these in which the community directly benefits from the processes of local government.”

Ms Wolmarans said hundreds of local organisations applied for the funding, which was advertised in the local media last year. “When all the applications for the annual GIA programme have been received, a committee comprising the Municipal Manager and the Directors of Community Services, Finance and Corporate Services, evaluated each application.

“Funds are allocated based on criteria such as the size and nature of the organisation, the purpose of funds, and whether the organisation is legally registered with the correct and relevant department and/or association. The final list of beneficiaries is submitted to, and approved by Council.

“In addition to these hand-overs, the municipality also assists organisations throughout the year on an ad hoc basis as more immediate needs arise. However, even emergency applications are first evaluated by the GIA committee according to the same criteria as annual applications,” said Wolmarans.

The municipality’s GIA programme budget for donations will total at R747 000 for the 2012/2013 financial year.

Grants handed over on March 13 ranged in value from R5 000 to R40 000, depending on the above-mentioned criteria, and were mostly directed towards specific projects. Funds this year will go towards projects such as créches, soup kitchens, victim support programmes, care of the elderly and disabled, sports development, cancer awareness, music lessons, preschool education, sea rescue equipment and training, youth development and more.

Beneficiaries are required to keep record of how they spend the funds, and may stand a chance to benefit again in future should they prove good management of previously allocated funds.

TRAFFIC OFFICER NONKI BECOMES A TV STAR

Knysna traffic officer Ernest ‘Nonki’ Nqoko has always been popular with locals, but his wide smile and upbeat antics while doing point duty on the N2 at George Rex Drive, have recently earned him national recognition.

Knysna resident Ellen Cane nominated Nonki as a ‘Dagbreker’ in the national Afrikaans network television station KykNet’s breakfast programme, Dagbreek (Day Break). The TV insert acknowledges individuals who make other people’s day in some way or another.

In her nomination Ms Cane wrote that Smiley, which is what the public calls him, or Papi (as the school kids call him), deserved the ‘Day breker’ title because he put a smile on everybody’s dial. “Every person who drives past him just wants to greet him and have a bit of his smile. This is difficult because he can’t turn the greetings as his hand signals may then give the wrong traffic instruction...and that’s why he just keeps on smiling. He really makes a difference in many people’s lives.”

Ms Cane added that Smiley was especially popular with children who looked out for him every day, and were pretty disappointed on the days when he was not on duty. “Children (hopefully with their seatbelts on) literally hang out of the windows of their parents’ vehicles to greet him. He is very friendly with a genuine ear-to-ear smile. It is really a pleasure to drive past him. Every-
In few wards have so many big things happened in such a short time. The first quarter of 2013 has seen the opening of two schools and a health centre in Concordia.

The good news is that even more progress will soon be on the cards as the ward allocation projects for Councillor Ntombizanele Sopeki’s Ward 8 get underway.

In January Concordia Primary and Concordia High Schools opened their doors. While the Primary School buildings have been completed, the High School does not yet have any permanent structures, and a very neat ‘temporary’ school has been erected adjacent to where the new school building is being built. Some 900 learners go school there under the very efficient eye of former Percy Mdala school principal Star Geldenhuis.

Councillor Sopeki said the new schools improved the lives of many families, who in the past had to get up very early to get their kids up and ready in time for school in other parts of town. “Parents are mostly very happy about schools that are now so much closer. The ward is very fortunate that enough suitable land was available for the schools to be built. We know not everyone has been happy that there are now three schools here while others wards don’t have any, but there was no suitable land elsewhere and we can’t say ‘no’ to schools anywhere, they are very much needed.”

The Concordia Day Centre opened at the beginning of March. This beautiful medical centre is operated by the Department of Health under the capable supervision of operational manager Kholeka Ntlanga and serves as a one-stop clinic with lots of space and brand new equipment.

Councillor Sopeki said locals could now get most of their services near their homes where before they would have had to go into the Knysna Hospital in town. “The fact that all the local and regional facilities – like the library, fire station, youth centre and health care – are all situated together, is so much more convenient,” she said.

More good news comes in the form of finances allocated to wards at the beginning of every financial year (July). Each ward gets R300 000 of which R100 000 can go towards operational projects such as clean-ups and events while the remainder is meant for capital projects. Ward projects are identified via the Integrated Development Programme (IDP) process, which involves local ward committees and the community.

In Ward 8, ward allocation money will be going towards the paving of roads at certain intersections as well as guard rails and retaining walls. Operational budget was spent on neighbourhood clean-ups.

To those celebrating Easter, the Knysna Municipality wishes you a blessed time and a truly spiritual experience.

Let’s also not forget the reasons for so many public holidays. In this time we celebrate victories in our country’s history, such as Freedom Day and Human Rights Day, as well as our privileges: Family Day and Workers Day. Let’s use this time to be truly thankful for the things our country has achieved and look forward to the many things we will continue to overcome.

Cllr Georlene Wolmarans
Executive Mayor
MAIN LIBRARY MOVES AS R5 MILLION EXTENSIONS BEGIN

The Knysna Main Library is temporarily moving to Woodmill Walk Centre in Long Street while R5-million worth of extensions and upgrades to the existing building begin.

Knysna Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said the library would be open for business at the new premises on 18 March 2013.

“We are very excited that extensions to this vital resource are finally getting underway. There are 15 schools that are served by this library and our children’s section in particular will benefit tremendously from the 460 square metre additions to the existing building,” said Waring.

The extensions are funded by R4, 4-million from the national Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) with the remainder paid for by the Knysna Municipality.

The Main Library will operate from the Woodmill Walk Centre (the old Edgars building) for an estimated ten months until work on the Main Street building has been completed.

“We apologise for any inconvenience caused during this period of relocation and upgrades, and appeal to residents and regular library users to bear with us during this time. The end result will be a beautifully refurbished and extended building that will serve our community and its children for many years to come,” said Waring.

The contact telephone numbers for the Main Library in Woodmill Walk will be 044 302 6308 and 044 302 3212.

NEW DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

The Knysna Municipality has appointed Mr Bevan Ellman as new Director Corporate Services in March.

Mr Ellman takes on the position previously held by Mr Reggie Smit, whose contract had ended with the municipality at the end of last year. Mr Gumbi Tyelela has been acting in this position for the past two months.

Knysna Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said she and her staff were looking forward to working with Mr Ellman. “His experience at all levels of the municipal environment will be of great value to our organisation and will bring a new point of view on matters pertaining to his new directorate. We welcome him to Knysna and to the municipality and believe that his time here will benefit the organisation and the people it serves,” said Ms Waring.

Originally from Oudtshoorn, Mr Ellman holds a BSc degree in Information Technology (IT) and Operational Research (Stellenbosch University), an Honours degree in Public Administration (Stellenbosch) as well as management qualifications from the Graduate School of Business of the University of Cape Town and the Business School of the University of Stellenbosch.

Until his appointment in Knysna he has worked at the Hessequa Municipality in Riverdale in various positions including Head of Supply Chain Management, IT Manager and Corporate Services Manager. His most recent position was Manager IT and Strategic Monitoring, which made him responsible for the strategic planning and monitoring of the municipality and its performance as well as compliance, operation clean audit and all reporting.

Mr Ellman said he was well aware of the responsibility of his new position and enthusiastic to take up the challenge. “I thank Council, the Mayor and her executive, and the Municipal Manager for their trust in my abilities and skills. I am committed to giving my very best not just to the organisation but to every resident in the Greater Knysna jurisdiction.”

Mr Ellman brings with him from Riversdale his wife Charmaine and two children, William, aged three and Hailey, aged one.

The Director Corporate Services is responsible for the administrative processes that ensure good governance and the achievement of Council’s strategic objectives. The Directorate incorporates the Departments of Administration, Committee Services, Estates, Human Resources, Legal Services, Property and Records Management and Public Participation.

Mr Ellman’s appointment is the second of four directorships that are expected to be filled this year. Mr Mike Maughan-Brown was appointed Director Planning and Development in January. The Director Community Services is expected to start in April. The post of Director Technical Services is being finalised.

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NEW CUSTOMER CARE SMS SERVICE LAUNCHED

The Knysna Municipality has just launched a new Customer Care SMS number.

Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said the SMS number 44453 was aimed at improving overall customer care but did not replace normal fault reporting procedures.

“Residents are still requested to report all queries to the relevant departments. Please do not use this number to report emergencies as they will not be picked up outside of office hours.

“The Customer Care SMS is there to report when queries are not attended to within the time frames set out by the Municipality’s service charter. The service charter is a section of the Customer Care Policy and is available on the municipality website. It indicates how long a member of the public can expect to wait for certain services to be attended to. For instance, reported pipe bursts receive priority while the required time to attend to the fixing of a street lamp is between seven and ten days from having been reported at the correct department.

“We hope the SMS line will make it easier especially for persons who do not have readily available access to other electronic communication mechanisms such as email,” said Waring.

The SMS will generate an email, which will be channelled to the municipality’s customer relations department. Clients are asked to provide a name and details of the complaint or query in the SMS to ensure the most efficient follow-up and feedback.

The 44453 line can also be used to commend the good service of specific departments or individuals, who could then be acknowledged for their good work and service.

REPORTING OF FAULTS AND QUERIES MUST BE DIRECTED TO:
Switchboard: 044 302 6300
Fire and Rescue All Hours: 044 302 8911
Water and Sewerage leaks office hours: 044 302 1601
Electricity office hours: 044 384 0422
Account queries office hours: 044 302 7720/1
Sedgefield office hours: 044 343 1640
All after hours reports: 044 302 8911

COMPLAINTS ALREADY REPORTED TO THE CORRECT DEPARTMENT AND NOT RESPONDED TO WITHIN THE REQUIRED TIME PERIOD:
SMS 44453 (normal SMS rates apply) or email customer@knysna.gov.za or 044 302 6410

RESPONSE TIMES ACCORDING TO KNYSNA MUNICIPALITY SERVICE CHARTER:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>Response from time reported or applied at correct department:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCOUNTS</td>
<td>10 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If applicable, corrections before next practicable account run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRES</td>
<td>15 – 20 minutes in town areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER EMERGENCIES</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEWER BLOCKAGES</td>
<td>3 hours, any required reparations 3 days of emergency action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(subject to procurement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAINING SEPTIC TANKS</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER LEAKS</td>
<td>3 hours, any required reparations 2 days of emergency action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(subject to procurement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFUSE COLLECTION</td>
<td>Weekly according the schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFORESEEN POWER OUTAGES</td>
<td>2 – 24 hours depending on situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAULTY STREET LIGHTING</td>
<td>7 – 10 days</td>
</tr>
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MAYOR MEETS OLDEST WAR VETERAN

Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans (back middle) paid a special visit to Hornlee resident Gert Goliath (seated), the oldest living World War II veteran living in Knysna, on his 90th birthday on 7 March. The mayor delivered a fruit basket on behalf of the municipality to honour his role in history. Celebrating the occasion with them were family members from left: Margaret Andrew, Shenda Goliath, Margaret Goliath, Gert Goliath, Pearl Botha, Richard Goliath and Chantel Goliath.

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