Blue Flag Beaches for Knysna again this summer

Buffalo Bay and Brenton-on-Sea will again be Blue Flag beaches this summer. It is the second consecutive year that the municipality has secured the coveted international accolade.

Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said that while many parties had worked very hard towards this goal, they had an added concern this year when the cargo ship Kani Satu went aground in Goukamma Nature Reserve and Marine Protected Area in August. “The situation potentially threatened both beaches. We were in communication with WESSA at the time and they were very supportive. This Blue Flag status means so much more in this context - things could have been very different. “The provisions for this status are very strict and we are proud that we could achieve it again, and we are immensely grateful towards everyone who assisted us towards attaining this goal.”

“We also congratulate the Thesen Islands Homeowners Association for attaining status as a Blue Flag Marina. We are very proud of their achievement and example, and we believe it will contribute to the tourism value of our town,” said Waring.

The applicable time frame will be December 2013 and January 2014. She emphasised that the municipality would again work with residents to ensure that people could walk their dogs at allocated times, outside designated swimming areas and on leashes at all times.

Blue Flag is an international coastal management programme that accredits beaches that meet standards of excellence in water quality, environmental management, environmental education and information as well as safety and services. In South Africa the programme is implemented by the Wildlife Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA).

Bridge over troubled sand dunes

Finally the foot bridge over the sand dunes at the top of Aloe Street has been replaced. Connecting Groenvlei with the communities of Sizamile/Smutsville, the bridge not only provides safe passage to residents but also safeguards dunes from erosion.

Lighting the way

Smutsville was one of the nine areas in the Knysna municipal area which received High Mast Area Lights over the past few months. The lights, which provide lighting of about 300-metre diameter each were financed by the Western Cape Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIIG) programme.

The municipality hopes to install another eight lights in the near future.

Knysna Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said the lights not only provided increased lighting in streets for the purposes of road safety and traffic flow, but also made neighbourhoods safer. “These lights help deter crime and vandalism, and improve the general appearance of residential areas, which ultimately increase the general living standards of our communities.”

Begonia Street

The Knysna Municipality is appealing to employers in Sedgefield to not use Begonia Street in Groenvlei as a pick-up point for labourers, but to make arrangements for pick-up in suitable spots in Oestervanger Street.

Knysna Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said that while it may be convenient, Begonia Street was too narrow to allow for the kind of activity and traffic that the picking up of labourers caused there, and ultimately threatened the safety of everyone who used the road.

“While sand from the dunes has covered the red lines painted on the road, Begonia Street is in fact a no-park zone. While the municipality wants to keep the good relationship it has with Sedgefield business owners, it will not hesitate to fine transgressors who continue with this practice.

“Our request the transgressing business owners to follow the example of many other businesses in town who have already made arrangements with their staff who then can still walk to a pick-up point that is relatively close to their homes but which is also safe and considerate towards all involved.”

“The Knysna Municipality thanks you in advance for your willingness to become part of the solution in this diverse community,” said Waring.

Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans at the official opening of Knysna’s Blue Flag beaches last year (2013). Picture: DESMOND SCHOLTZ

Edna Thomson

Smutsville’s Youth Advisor is Edna Thomson. She is available for youth enquiries and assistance at the Community Centre in Rooikrans Lane from 10am-7pm on weekdays. She can be contacted on 044 302 6330 or at smutsvilleyc@knysna.gov.za