**Changes in Council Leadership**

The Knysna Municipal Council made two changes at a Special Council Meeting on the 7th of July when replacements for the late Cllr Magda Williams and former Speaker Michelle Wasserman were announced.

Ms. Eleanore Bouw-Spies was sworn in as the new councillor for ward 5 following the DA’s win of the by-election on Wednesday July 2nd. Cllr Bouw-Spies was also appointed the new Speaker after Cllr Wasserman’s resignation.

Knysna Executive Mayor, Georlene Wolmarans, also announced changes to her Mayoral Committee. “Cllr Ray Barrell takes the place of Cllr Richard Dawson as Chairperson of the Section 80 Committee for Governance and Economic Development and Cllr Irene Grootboom fills the position of Chairperson of the Section 80 Committee for Community Services, previously held by the late Magda Williams.”

She said the sudden passing of Magda did not only necessitate a by-election, it also left a void in the Mayoral Committee. “Now with the by-election behind us I have been given the opportunity to review and appoint new members to assist me in moving our mandate forward.”

The new committee will be as follows. The Council’s new Executive Leadership is:

- Cllr Georlene Wolmarans, Executive Mayor
- Cllr Esmé Edge, Deputy Executive Mayor & Chairperson: Finance Committee
- Cllr Eleanore Bouw-Spies, Speaker
- Cllr Ray Barrell, Chairperson: Governance & Economic Development Committee
- Cllr Irene Grootboom, Chairperson: Community Services
- Cllr Louisa Hart, Chairperson: Planning, Development & Infrastructure Committee

The Mayor paid special tribute to Councillors Wasserman and Dawson. “Cllr Dawson has served the Council very well in many leadership roles, first as Speaker and later as a member of the Mayoral Committee. Cllr Wasserman did an exceptional job as Speaker and I wish her well with her future endeavours. Both councillors will now be able to devote more time and energy to serving the residents of their wards.”

She said that it was their vision to build a town where people and nature prosper, and that they are making great strides towards achieving this goal. “I am confident that this newly appointed Mayoral Committee has the right mixture of experience, knowledge and expertise to help us to continue to deliver the best service to our communities.”

**Important Notice: New telephone numbers for departments**

To streamline communication and make it easier for the public to reach the municipality, the telephone numbers of the various Departments have been consolidated. All telephone numbers with the exception of the Sedgefield Fire Station now start with the digits “302”. Please take note of the following important numbers:

- Account Enquiries: 044 302 6558 or 044 302 6559
- Electrical Department: 044 302 6397 or 044 302 6399
- Technical Services: 044 302 6331 or 044 302 6334
- Sedgefield (All Sections): 044 302 6500
- The numbers for our main switchboard (044 302 6300) and Emergency Services (044 302 8911) remain the same.
Knysna to host Blue Flag national launch

Celebrated for maintaining Blue Flag status for two of its beaches and one marina, Mr. Derek Hanekom, the new National Minister for Tourism will host the national launch of the annual Blue Flag season in October this year in Knysna.

Knysna Executive Mayor, Georlene Wolmarans, said that this is a feather in Knysna’s cap. “Tourism is one of the largest income generators in the world and it is also the main driving force behind Knysna’s economy. We are geared towards offering visitors service at international standards and are looking forward to welcome these delegates to the town.

She said that Knysna is known for its natural resources; pristine beaches, dune areas and estuaries. “Over the last ten years Knysna has experienced tremendous growth and we are well aware of the impact it has had on our natural resources. Together with our partners we are doing everything possible to protect these natural resources.”

Wolmarans continued saying that the municipality also believes in investing in people. “Council is excited and in full support of the Blue Flag programme and the benefits derived from the programme. To participating municipalities Blue Flag sites are a source of income as tourism numbers increase, it creates job opportunities and infrastructure is improved. It also has a positive impact in terms of environmental management.”

According to Lauren Waring, Knysna’s municipal manager, it was not easy to achieve Blue Flag status. “33 main criteria spanning over four aspects of coastal management must be met - water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management and safety and services. Council enjoys a good working relationship with the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) and we commend them for the substance, stringent framework and meticulous detail of the programme. Under their leadership the programme has grown significantly and each year sees new beaches being introduced to the programme.”

“With a proven track record as being one of the world’s top destinations, Knysna is ready and look forward to host the 2014 national launch”, concluded Waring.

South Africa has participated in the Blue Flag programme since 2001. 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. The Blue Flag programme offers many benefits: improved tourism facilities, enhanced management of coastal ecosystems, increased awareness of the coast and capacity building of coastal municipalities. In South Africa the programme is implemented by the Wildlife Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA).

Knysna Municipality hands over title deeds in Hornlee

On Friday the 27th of June the Knysna Municipality handed over 100 title deeds to residents of Hornlee. Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans congratulated the new homeowners with the inspirational words of the late Nelson Mandela; “A man is not a man until he has a house of his own”.

Ms. Wolmarans said it was an important occasion to restore pride and dignity to these residents, and to create wealth and power by the transfer of title to land.

She urged the new owners to look after their new assets. “We truly hope that the new homeowners realise that with this piece of paper comes great responsibility. Pay your municipal accounts diligently, maintain your property as it adds value and above all, do not to sell your house just to become a back yard dweller again.”

Wolmarans continued to say that the day gave her a chance to reflect on the type of town the Council is building for Knysna. “It is not just about providing houses. We should not underestimate the value of a shared society that everyone owns and this is why Council’s approach has shifted towards building integrated human settlements, creating opportunities for a community in which no-one is left out - making a real difference to the quality of life of our people”.

Ownership motivates people not only with a new sense of personal ‘place’, but also with a basis to begin leveraging a better place in society. When asked what it meant to them, most recipients said they were elated about becoming first time homeowners, and some are already thinking of how they can improve their newly acquired asset.

The municipality’s manager for Integrated Human Settlements, Mawethu Penxa, said his department is working closely with the municipality’s Legal department to speed up the process of transferring property.
Knysna Hope Spot

(Nandi Mgwadlamba: SANParks)

Partnering with SANParks, Eden District Municipality, Cape Nature, The Knysna Basin Project, Biowise and the Lakes Bird Club the municipality are combining efforts and resources to put Knysna on the map as the next Hope Spot.

Hope Spots are places that are critical to the health of the ocean. The ocean occupies two-thirds of the planet’s surface and contains 97% of the Earth’s water. The total volume is approximately 1.3 billion cubic kilometers (310 million cu mi) with an average depth of 3,682 meters.

Some of these Hope Spots are already formally protected, while others still need defined protection. The prospective Hope Spot in Knysna includes the Knysna estuary which opens up to the Atlantic Ocean at the Heads. The estuary which is managed by SANParks, is a protected area in the Garden Route National Park. It is rated as SA’s number 1 in terms of biodiversity significance. It is home to the Knysna seahorse (Hippocampus capensis), classified as Endangered (Hilton-Taylor 2000), and is widespread in Swartvlei and Knysna estuaries though not abundant. In excess of 200 species of fish have been recorded in the Knysna Estuary alone (Bulpin 1978). The permanently open estuary enables free access to typical marine species, with the result numerous recordings of species which do not normally occur in estuaries.

Once declared a ‘Hope Spot’ Knysna will join other global players like Chagos, the Outer Seychelles, the Coral Triangle, the Micronesian Islands, Gulf of Mexico Deep Reefs, Gulf of Guinea and 44 of the world’s other Hope Spots.

The pulse of the Hope Spot campaign is to demystify the ocean and its significance. Do citizens understand the significance of protecting the ocean, in Knysna, the estuary and other related marine areas? The Knysna Hope Spot partners are finding opportunities to extend their educational and awareness efforts to focus purely on the prospective Hope Spot. The exhibition during one of Knysna’s biggest events, the Pick n Pay Knysna Oyster Festival, was the first of many steps leading to December when Mission Blue, the initiators of the campaign, plan to visit Knysna to see if it meets criteria to qualify as a Hope Spot.

Two of Knysna’s beaches have Blue Flag status. The pristine Brenton-on-Sea and Buffalo Bay beaches, which are managed by the Knysna Municipality, received this prestigious award for two consecutive years and in 2013 the Thesen Islands Ratepayers Association also attained status as a Blue Flag Marina.

Spokesperson and Chair of the Knysna Hope Spot, Vernon Gibbs-Halls reiterated the importance of Hope Spots in South Africa. “We remain committed to the protection of our coastal resources throughout Eden and the declaration of a Hope Spot will endorse our efforts towards the conservation of marine species and enhance the sustainable use of these natural resources whilst it raises greater public awareness surrounding marine issues.”

Act now; make it your business to know about your ocean.

For more information, follow us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/knysnahopespot

Dealing with Baboons

Baboon activity in residential areas increases from about June to August as food in the veld and forests decline in winter, and local baboon populations come in search of other sources of sustenance. Residents living near the urban edge are most likely to be affected, and therefore a special request to them to heed the following advice:

- Keep doors locked and windows closed when baboons are in the vicinity.
- Install night bolts on sliding doors to prevent baboons from lifting them off their tracks.
- Install latches on the opening edge of windows, particularly top-hung ones, so that baboons cannot pull the frame and break the glass.
- Install burglar bars on windows you usually keep open. Keep in mind that nowhere there should be more than an 8cm gap to ensure that even the babies stay out.
- Baboon-proof your rubbish by placing it inside a caged area, lockable bin or inside in the garage.
- Do not have food on display where it can be seen.
- Do not leave pet food outside or feed pets outside.
- Do not put seed out for wild birds.
- Do not plant fruit trees, vegetable gardens or make compost heaps unless they are situated inside a locked caged area or surrounded by electric fencing.
- Plant indigenous as baboons love exotic plants.
- NEVER feed baboons. They will return to your property again and again.

Please report any baboon activity to 044 302 6551 (during office hours) or 044 302 8911 (after hours).

CapeNature can be contacted at 044 802 5300.

Rave reviews for the 31st annual Pick ‘n Pay Knysna Oyster Festival

(by Thereza Lozier)

The 31st annual Pick n Pay Knysna Oyster Festival was held 4-13 July 2014. Festival Manager Nicci Rousseau-Schmidt says the festival saw many improvements from previous years. “For the first time mid-week events like the Knysna Wine Festival, the Flavours of Knysna gourmet evening and the Comedy Shuckle were sold out. Retailers and restauranteurs have reported better business than in previous years, and hoteliers ranging from budget to luxury have commented that mid-week occupancies were much better compared to the past.

Athletes who participated in the BIG5 Sport Challenge and the first ever ‘Lite’ option commented on the camaraderie of being part of the week-long challenge which has gained traction. Cyclists complimented organisers on the improved routes, which were more scenic and also safer in terms of traffic control, and the marathon was once again a sold out highlight. I also want to express thanks on behalf of the Festival to all of the event organisers, the sponsors, Knysna Tourism and the municipality for the support that has made the festival a success year after year.”
As part of the initiative to facilitate economic development within the hand craft industry in the Greater Knysna the Economic Development Department has facilitated the establishment of the Hands Design Collective Co-operative.

Ilse van Schalkwyk, Manager: Economic Development, said the department partnered with leading local crafters who are actively involved in this sector as craft entrepreneurs. “We want to provide support for the needs of creative businesses in the local economy and grow the region’s craft and design sector. The Hands Co-op has been assisted by our local SEDA branch as well as the Economic Development department with the vision that they will provide a single resource centre for crafters to gain access to support services.”

The services will include:

- **Product support** – to provide an environment in which designers and craft producers can further develop their existing products or prototype new products;
- **Business support** - to help craft producers and designers to develop skills in creativity, business and production management, and marketing;
- **Market support** – to assist designers and craft producers to define and reach their targeted markets.

She said that there are many talented individuals in the Knysna area and to see their businesses flourish, they require sales. “Unfortunately as with any business venture you need to be a good marketer and understand branding and product trends to ensure the success of your business. The vision for Hands is to take the business support required and centralise this in the form of a co-op where crafters can access this support service, get access to training, get their products market ready and gain access to different marketing opportunities. This will convert to more orders for their products. We work with craft producers, designers and a wide range of other creative entrepreneurs. Although Hands is at the incubation stage, the potential is infinite and we encourage crafters to make use of Hands and the services offered.”

The Hands Co-op can be contacted at handsdesigncollective@gmail.com or the shop can be visited in Woodmill Lane. Interested parties can also visit the Hands Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/handsdesigncollective) for more information on news, events and projects.

To register on the craft database, contact Ilse van Schalkwyk (ivanschalkwyk@knysna.gov.za). Registration will enable you to get involved in the future training and support programmes for all crafters from export clubs to product development.

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**Western Cape Premier’s Entrepreneurship Recognition Awards**

The Western Cape Premier’s Entrepreneurship Recognition Awards 2014 is the second year of this prestigious programme to recognize the importance, achievements and potential of some of the Province’s most exciting entrepreneurs. By acknowledging, supporting and showcasing successful entrepreneurs, this Awards programme helps to build a culture of entrepreneurship, encourage new start-ups as well as business excellence and achievement. The prizes are as follows:

- **Winner, emerging business** R90,000 cash
- **Winner, established business** R90,000 cash
- **Winner, social enterprise** R90,000 cash
- **Winner, green business** R90,000 cash
- **best student idea** R90,000 cash
- **Overall winner: Entrepreneur of the Year**
- **Trip for two people to attend a global entrepreneurship event or international trade fair, to the value of R100,000**
- **R50,000 in cash to be used to develop the business**

A panel of experienced, independent and expert judges will evaluate all entries using a standard scoring system. All judges will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure the confidentiality of entrants’ information.

Three finalists per category will be selected and the winner will be chosen from these finalists. Site visits may be conducted to verify the information provided.

Finalists may also be required to give a short presentation on their business or student idea to the judging panel, and answer questions from the panel. Failure to attend this presentation may result in a finalist not being considered, or being replaced by the next eligible finalist.

For competition rules, terms and conditions and any further information visit www.wcpremiersawards.co.za or e-mail entries@wcpremiersawards.co.za. The closing date for entries is 15 August 2014.