FROM THE MAYOR’S DESK – HAPPY HOLIDAYS

What an eventful year it has been for Knysna. This year will certainly be remembered for the worst fire in recent history - which changed the lives of countless of our residents. Nature is our biggest inspiration. Have you noticed the green sprouting everywhere, from blackened trees to barren hillsides? And so it has been with us - the town stood up and arose “out of the ashes”. Numerous Festivals and events have been hosted successfully since the fire, new buildings are going up everywhere, and here we are, at the beginning of one of our busiest times, the summer holidays.

We are ready. Blue flag beaches have been launched, seasonal staff have been appointed and trained, and all relevant departments are on standby to cope with the influx of visitors. Thank you in advance to these staff members who will work long hours on days where most others are on holiday – we appreciate what you do!

Cape Town is a constant reminder of the consequences of water shortages. Please use water sparingly. Put up the necessary notices to make everyone in your house or business aware of the issue, and, where possible, install water management systems. Look after our natural resources – after all, these are what make Knysna special, and we want to keep it that way!

Lastly, it seems that life may have dealt us lemons this year - and some of us are still trying to find the fizz to make lemonade, whilst others have to get rid of a year of worries and busyness. Please remember that patience and kindness are never overrated, let them be your guide this holiday season in Knysna.

Have a wonderful holiday and compliments of the Season.

FESTIVE SEASON TRAFFIC OPERATIONAL LAUNCH

On Friday, 24 November, the Western Cape Provincial Traffic Department, in collaboration with Eden District Local Municipalities, launched the Eden District Regional Operational Plan in Sedgefield

Anthony Bans, Knysna Municipal Traffic Chief, asked all road users to act responsibly. “Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy and do not overload vehicles, especially public transport services. Any vehicle found not roadworthy will be impounded and the owner/driver will be liable to pay a fee before it is released. We will not tolerate inebriated drivers and pedestrians and have adopted a Zero Tolerance approach towards any motorist who breaks the law. Fines will be issued on the spot.”

“All stakeholders are geared up for the season and more resources and extra personnel will be on duty. As a safety precaution, switch on your headlights at all times, and wear your seat belts. Stay safe!”
The Knysna Municipality officially launched the holiday Blue Flag beach season at Brenton-on-Sea and Buffels Bay on the 30th of November. A special flag hoisting ceremony was held at Brenton-on-Sea attended by Knysna Executive Mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies, municipal officials, representatives from the Wildlife Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA), South African National Parks (SANParks), Brenton Ratepayers Association and residents.

Bouw-Spies said Blue Flag status was a great achievement: “It is a major boost for tourism, economic development and job creation. Acquiring this status requires hard work from our side, and needs the buy-in and input of a variety of stakeholders to work together as a collective.”

“We have two Blue Flag beaches this year; Buffalo Bay and Brenton-on-Sea. Please respect the conditions of this international accolade, which applies from 1 December 2013 to 31 January 2014,” said Bouw-Spies.

The Brackenhill community on the eastern border of Knysna finally “switched-on” on Saturday, 2 December, when they received electricity for the first time. During the ceremony, Knysna Executive Mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies highlighted the importance of building strong partnerships between government, private business and communities. “Thanks to PG Bison, Eskom, MTO, Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, the Brackenhill Committee and Knysna Municipality, life in this community is now most certainly better, safer & happier.”

The Mayor extended a big thank you to Nedbank for paying it forward! In support of the Mayor’s “Green Fridays”, Nedbank has launched a tree-planting campaign. Kathleen Mells, Business Manager from Nedbank Business Banking Knysna, said that this is an effort to rehabilitate and re-green Greater Knysna after the recent devastating fires.

Please visit our Facebook page for more info on controlling invasive plants in the post-fire environment. Numerous projects are underway to ensure the weed re-growth is under control to allow indigenous vegetation to restore itself. For more information you can also call Pam Booth on 044 302 6317 email pbooth@knysna.gov.za.

On Friday 1 December the team, joined by Knysna Executive Mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies, visited Knysna Senior Secondary School and Concordia High School to plant the first trees.

The Knysna Municipal Environmental Management Department has installed an arid garden outside the Planning and Development office building.

The garden was established as part of Arbor Week activities with the hope that it will encourage local residents to follow suit. It also shows how you can ‘green’ your environment and use less water.

Given the massive habitat loss of bees due to the recent fires, the garden includes plants that are a food source for, and attract, butterflies and bees.

“The BUTT STOPS HERE” – we need your help!

Please visit the Knysna Kicks Butt Campaign website to learn more about cigarette butts and how to help.

The Knysna Municipality, BioWise and Ocean Odyssey have launched the Knysna Kicks Butt Campaign with the aim to rid Greater Knysna of its cigarette butt problem.

Sue Swain of Biowise says that cigarette butts are the most commonly discarded piece of waste worldwide. “Butts contain hazardous chemicals such as cadmium, arsenic and lead. When discarded in our streets, they end up in our storm-water system which ultimately drains into our estuaries. There these toxic chemicals leach into the aquatic ecosystem, threatening the quality of the water and marine life.”

“Considering the biological and socioeconomic importance of the Knysna estuary, we must
prevent discarded butts from ending up in our lagoon. Specially designed bins have been placed around Knysna and Sedgefield, as well as at the recently declared Blue Flag Beaches. Please look out for them and encourage everyone to use them!”

She said that as they contain toxic substances the butts cannot be discarded where these chemicals could leach and pollute ground water. “BioWise will research how these butts can be ‘treated’ to remove or break down the toxic chemicals, and then will explore how the remaining non-toxic absorbent material can be put to good use.”

Should you wish to purchase a bin, these can be ordered from BioWise via sue@biowise.org.za. The first 20 orders for bins are offered at a special 50% discounted rate of R275 each, thanks to funding from the National Lotteries Commission.

CLOSURE OF MUNICIPAL OFFICES 22 DECEMBER 2017 TO 2 JANUARY 2018

Please note that the offices of the Knysna Municipality will close at 12h00 on Friday 22 December 2017 and reopen at 07h30 on Wednesday 3 January 2018.

The Customer Pay Centre, Main Street, Knysna, will be open on 27, 28 and 29 December 2017 between 08h00 to 12h00.

All essential and emergency services will be delivered.

For enquiries or emergencies, please contact the Knysna Fire Department on 044 302 8911.

REFUSE REMOVAL

Please note that refuse removal will continue as per normal during the holiday season except for Christmas and New Year’s days. Refuse will be collected on Tuesday, 26 December 2017 instead of Monday, 25 December 2017 and Tuesday, 2 January 2018 instead of Monday, 1 January 2018.

SANTA’S SHOEBOX

Our Executive Mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies, together with the Speaker, municipal councillors and staff started the spirit of the Festive Season by handing over Santa shoeboxes to the Santa Shoebox co-ordinator for the Garden Route, Ms Kelly Picken.

The Mayor thanked the staff for opening their hearts and wallets to give to those who are less fortunate.

OTHER EMERGENCY NUMBERS

SA Police Services: 10111 / 044 302 6600
NSRI: 044 384 0211
Provincial Traffic Services: 044 382 5525
Knysna Provincial Hospital: 044 302 8400
Knysna Private Hospital: 044 384 1083
Provincial Ambulance Services: 044 382 5613 / 044 382 8488
ER24: 084 124