We live in a fantastic town, other people want to move here, to live here and dream of a holiday or retirement house here. Yet, if you look at what news is generated locally about our town, one thinks surely this cannot be the same town? Over the last few months I have been observing a trend - a trend on digital platforms, a trend in the media, a trend at dinner parties - a trend of negativity. If you listen to these conversations, it is clear that many of our residents do not share these sentiments with the world.

I am not saying everything is all rosy, there is a fact of life that things go wrong at some stage, sometimes in our control, sometimes not. It is how we deal with these challenges along the way that make the difference. If you look at the municipalities where we have received a clean audit two years in a row. We are rated as one of the top municipalities in South Africa, with the same challenges as our counterparts. Knysna had to deal with floods, droughts, ageing infrastructure and a recession – it has been a tough couple of years. Yet services within our control have been delivered on a regular basis. Compared to the horror stories we hear in the rest of South Africa we have a fully functional and financially sound municipality. However, if you listen to what is being said by the residents the above achievements are rarely even mentioned?

For the critical among us, it will be easy to find something that is wrong. Yes, crime increased and some businesses closed down as a result of the global recession. Challenges that have to be dealt with. However, we are lucky that the tourism industry has picked up over the last two years, and we have one of the world’s favourite destinations. Tourism kept our economy going and until we’ve established alternatives, which are working on, we are dependent on this industry for the town to survive.

If we want our visitors to return year on year, we as the locals should start to get more positive about our environment. If the above trend continues and we’ve finally got through to the world just how “bad” it is to live here and made them focus on all the problems we have, they may just decide to make another destination their favourite. Can you imagine the effect that will have on this town?

I am not saying sweep our problems, municipal or not, under the carpet, I am saying be objective about them. Be responsible when you comment and think about the consequences. Be selective who you are listening to and what you believe. There are those qualified to comment on matters, and there are those motivated by personal issues. It is important to make the distinction before you make your judgement. Let us be a responsible audience. An audience that think matters through, an audience that understands that whatever the topic, there are always two sides of the story. Decisions are rarely black and white and there are a variety of matters influencing which you can only be aware of if you were part of the decision making process.

Regardless of my position, I live with my family in Knysna, as you do. I own a house here and have to make a living here. It is in my interest to look after Knysna, as it is for each and every one of you who live here, who invested in Knysna, and who love Knysna and the surrounding areas. I am sure you would have heard the saying that if you are visiting or new to an area and you want to find the best service, restaurant, etc., somewhere, ask a local. We are after all the best marketers the town could have, let’s honor the investment and live up to Knysna’s expectations.

Other important numbers:
SA Police Services: 10111 | +27 (044) 302 6600
Provincial Traffic: +27 (044) 382 5525
NSR: +27 (044) 384 0211
Knysna Provincial Hospital: +27 (044) 302 6400
Life Prime Private Hospital: +27(044) 384 1083
ER24: 084 124
Ambulance Services: +27 (044) 382 5633 / 302 8488

City Office:
125a Main Road | Knysna Central | 6555
Contact us:
ALL SECTIONS OFFICE HOURS:
Tel: +27 (044) 382 5523
EMERGENCY CALL HOURS: 044 302 8911
ANTI-FRAUD & CORRUPTION HOTLINE: 0800 214 764
CUSTOMER SERVICES: SMS: 44453 | customercare@knysna.gov.za
Email: knysna@knysna.gov.za
Follow us on twitter @KnysnaMuni

From the Mayor’s Pen
Who are Knysna’s best marketers?
Knysna was recently announced as South Africa’s favourite travel destination by sleeping-out.co.za. We are one of the most popular destinations for international tourists if you look at the TripAdvisor votes we receive annually.

The increase in younger population demographics is negotiating the establishment of a bigger children’s section to cater for the information needs of a growing school population. In addition to the above, the proliferation in information technology has resulted in an increased demand for access to computers and the objectives. A computer lab will therefore be established to cater for this growing need.

The Sedgefield Town Library Hall will be converted to accommodate the additional need; thus there will no longer be a hall facility for hire.

As an alternative the Committee Room, which is situated in the main municipal building will be made available for hire. Users are welcome to contact the caretaker at 044 302 6555 or call at the reception desk to make their bookings.

**Bigger children’s library to cater for growing minds**

**Dates to remember**

**Overview of the Integrated Strategic Development Framework**

The Integrated Strategic Development Framework (ISDF) was conceived in 2012 as Council recognised that there was a myriad of disconnected, but related, plans and strategies which had been developed over the previous years. These plans needed to be reviewed, and thereafter now ideas and energies harnessed and integrated in order to develop a twenty year development strategy. It was also accepted that the traditional five-year planning cycle of local government, as per the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), was too short-term.

The Draft ISDF, or Knysna 2015 – 2025; Where People and Nature Prosper, was developed upon one of the largest public participation processes undertaken by Knysna Municipality. Over 1 500 people or entities participated in the Café Connections which serves as a basis for directing the community’s inputs into the strategy. It clearly provides the Municipality; other governmental and non-governmental authorities; as well as civil society and business with an understanding of what matters most to the people of the Greater Knysna Municipal Area. The strategy also sets out plans and tools for how our collective abilities will be able to make our town prosper.

The Draft ISDF consists of four primary but fully integrated units; namely the Spatial Development Framework (as set out in the Local Government Municipal Structures Act), the Integrated Human Settlement Strategy; the State of the Environment Analysis; and the Economic Development Strategy. Each of these can be broken down into plans and projects.

Executive Mayor, Georline Wolmarans said that once again Knysna is leading the way by setting a planning horizon of twenty years.

The next step in the process would be to submit the Draft ISDF to a Special Portfolio Committee meeting and thereafter to the February Municipal Committee. It is anticipated that the full Council will consider and approve the draft strategy at the end of February whereafter the public consultation process will be undertaken. Thereafter the inputs from the public will be considered and the draft document revised as required. It is intended that the final document will be submitted to Council in May in order to ensure alignment with the Budget process.

All members of the public are invited and encouraged to participate in the public consultation process.

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