From the Mayor’s Pen

Dear readers,

What an exciting time this autumn has been in Knysna! We painted the town pink during the Pink Loerie Mardi Gras and Arts Festival, we saw an amazing display of classic cars at the Knysna Motor Show, and then the fast and furious arrived for the Knysna Speed Festival and the Jaguar Simola Hill Climb. Sedgefield hosted the Expedition Africa Adventure Race and then we’ve got the Knysna 200 cycle race coming up along with the highlight of our winter calendar: the Pick in Pay Knysna Oyster Festival.

Knysna is fortunate to host an array of events that add life and interest to what can be a very drab winter. Thank you to all the event organisers for an amazing job done. We know that these events bring a welcome boost to our local economy and to our local charities. I received a R180 000 donation on behalf of the Vermont Centre during the Pink Loerie Mardi Gras and Arts Festival – a notable display of all the charitable contributions of the events. Knysna plays host to during the year, monetary or otherwise. It may change the way we see the events.

My office is inundated with requests from charitable organisations and individuals, but it is impossible to help everyone. There are families within our municipal area with nothing to eat. Food provided by the e-Pap programme at some of our schools is often the only meal some children have. Drive past the Loerie Park entrance in George Rex Drive on any given day and one notices the huge number of people lining up, looking for work.

Margaret Mead, world famous anthropologist and women’s rights activist, said that one should never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. “Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

The individuals providing soup to the people sitting next to George Rex Drive are such people. So is the couple who made the generous contribution to Vermont; and the event managers, often volunteers, raising millions for local charities. Existing efforts to help are too many to mention and I commend each and every one of you. However, we need to do more. Each and every one of us must ask ourselves – how can I make a difference? We do not have to do big things. Not everyone has the resources to make large financial contributions. People often question their ability to make a difference, but remember that as one person you might make a difference, but remember that as one person you might

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Let us extend and add to those generous gestures this winter, a hard time for so many as the cold weather sets in. Whether you support an existing initiative such as my blanket drive, or start your own, you can make a difference.

#SAVEmonetary or otherwise. It may change the way we see the events.

The Solid Waste Department attends to numerous sites where community members dump waste illegally. Dumping often occurs on vacant land and public open spaces, and too often is driven by the desire to save money. Illegal dumping adversely affects the entire community. It can cause harm to people and nature and can also cause contamination of our already threatened water supply. It also influences increases in service costs, by driving up the expenses the municipality incurs to collect and dispose of the debris. Community Services and enforcement departments find guilty parties, but this is possible only with the assistance of the community through tip-offs.

- What is illegal dumping?
- Illegal dumping and littering is the unlawful disposal of rubbish onto public land other than approved waste management facilities. It is illegal to dispose of litter in streets, parks, footpaths, car parks, etc.

- How does it impact the community?
- Harms the environment;
- Attracts additional dumping and other illegal behaviour;
- Can be a health and safety hazard;
- Can pollute our water sources, and is costly to Council and the community.

The 2016/2017 draft budget was tabled on 31 March whereafter the municipality rolled out a series of public participation meetings in each ward.

Knysna Municipality has developed a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance, as outlined in the Municipal Systems Act 2000. Unfortunately, the public has not shown a lot of enthusiasm for participating.

Ms Wolmarans expressed her disappointment regarding the lack of participation from the community. “The turn-out at the community meetings held in April was very poor. We have encouraged our communities to partake in the affairs of local government, as it is their democratic right to do so. We have recently celebrated 22 years of freedom and it is sad to see that our community is not taking full advantage of the democratic privileges we all enjoy today.”

“We cannot stress the importance of public participation enough,” it provides an appropriate platform for the community to express their concerns, gives input and have robust discussions with their councillors and municipal officials. This is a far more effective manner of engagement and communication than barracading the N2.”

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Budget Public Participation Process

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