From the Mayor’s Pen

This month I want to hail the Constitutional Court for their landmark ruling regarding President Jacob Zuma and the Nkandla issue, which was delivered at the end of March.

The ruling is a highlight in our democratic history for a variety of reasons. One, it protected our Constitution, once described as the best in the world, giving a clear “hands off” signal by our highest court. Two, I believe that this could be a turning point for cronyism and corruption which is rife in South Africa and three, that acknowledging and upholding the findings of the Public Prosecutor has sent a clear message.

I believe this finding will give South Africans the confidence to speak up and build on our young and dynamic democracy. It is showing South Africans that you can make a difference and that there are people and institutions that will not hesitate to take on the highest authority, if needs be.

Before the end of August, this year, the voters will have the opportunity to show if they find it acceptable that our Constitution was flagrantly disrespected, or if they agree with the Public Protector and the Constitutional Court. I think our democracy was hard earned and is too precious for us to let this pass by without making this point with our strongest weapon – our votes.

I believe this is something we should reflect on when we celebrate Freedom Day on 27 April - celebrating freedom and commemorating the first post-apartheid elections held on this day in 1994. We only realise now how well the system that President Nelson Mandela and his team put in place to safeguard South Africa was thought out. The success of the system depends on two things: first, the “watchdogs” in place must actually keep watch and act where appropriate, and secondly, South Africans must play their part in our democracy and vote with the country’s best interests at heart.

It is clear that the “watchdogs” are doing their job – will we?

Georlene Wolmarans • Executive Mayor

Draft budget tabled for public input

Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans tabled the draft annual budget for the 2016/2017 financial year during a Special Council Meeting held on Thursday 31 March. “Our aim is to face challenges head-on with this budget,” she said. We will continue to do so until our term comes to an end.”

Residents can obtain copies of the draft budget from the municipal offices, libraries and Knysna Municipality’s website (www.knysna.gov.za). The closing date for written representations from the public is set for Tuesday, 3 May at 16:30. At the culmination of the process, the Executive Mayor must consider all representations and decide if the budget should be amended.

It should be noted that the proposed tariff hikes for the municipality remain below double digits. The proposed increases are as follows: rates at 8.9%; refuse services at 9.5%, water services at 9.5%, sewerage at 8.9% and electricity at 7.6%.

“The downturn in the national economy means development has virtually ceased and unless this position can be reversed quickly, Knysna will have serious difficulties,” she said. “With the welfare of all residents of our beautiful town at heart, Council has taken the decision to fast-track economic development at all levels.”

“Only three options are available to Knysna: to aggressively grow our status as a preferred international tourist hub; to actively seek investment in environmentally-friendly manufacturing initiatives to create more jobs; and to attract more service companies with the aim of job creation.”

“This budget rests on the idea of an inclusive social contract, encompassing an even-handed and fair burden of rates and taxes to fund our progressive programme of expenditures,” she continued. “We urge residents to participate in this process and, through the simple act of paying their rates, ensure the financial well-being of the area.”

“Housing, education, health, the environment and economic development are the top priorities of this draft budget. Our motto is ‘Making people and nature prosper’ and the proposed budget will allow us to continue to do so.”

The proposed increases are as follows: rates at 8.9%; refuse services at 9.5%, water services at 9.5%, sewerage at 8.9% and electricity at 7.6%.

The proposed budget is designed to address the needs and priorities of residents and businesses. It includes investment in important infrastructure projects, such as roads, bridges and community facilities. The budget also allocates funds for the continued delivery of essential services, such as water and waste management.

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“This budget rests on the idea of an inclusive social contract, encompassing an even-handed and fair burden of rates and taxes to fund our progressive programme of expenditures,” she continued. “We urge residents to participate in this process and, through the simple act of paying their rates, ensure the financial well-being of the area.”

“The challenge remains focusing on the necessities and eliminating the ‘nice-to-have’ elements. This challenge is compounded not only by the disparity between the affluent communities of Knysna and our historically disadvantaged residents, but by Eskom’s tariff increases and our urgent need to address infrastructure requirements - specifically regarding our water supply. We aim to close these gaps and ensure a better life for all residents of Knysna with the implementation of this balanced budget.”
Despite recent rains in the Garden Route, Knysna Municipality is still asking all residents to make an effort to use water wisely, implement conservation measures and adhere to municipal water restrictions.

According to Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans, the recent rains will not resolve our water situation. “I ask all residents to continue using water sparingly,” she urged. “Treating water as the precious, limited resource it is must become a way of life – not only in Knysna, not only in South Africa, but globally.

“Our consumption is still high and it is vital that our consumption is curbed so that our water reserves can be replenished. Although we have seen some positive results due to our Water Awareness Campaign, as a town Knysna has not reached our consumption target of 8 megalitres per day, which includes the 2 megalitre allocation for business use. This equates to 85 litres per person per day.

“We have seen better results in Sedgefield, with consumption around 2 megalitres per day, while the target is 1,9 megalitres. A big thumbs-up to residents of Sedgefield for coming together and showing us all what can be done.”

While the rivers are full and flowing, Knysna has a total water pumping capacity of 9,9 megalitres per day augmented by other sources to ±10,6 megalitres. Knysna’s consumption is still too high and is often above 12 megalitres, while the aim is for a target of 8 megalitres per day. This means the off-channel (not situated on an actual river) Akkerkloof dam, the town’s main reserve, is slowly emptying. The geography of the region limits the catchment area that feeds Knysna’s storage capacity.

“We need to bring the level of consumption down to below our pumping capacity,” says Mayor Wolmarans. “In doing so the Akkerkloof dam and the Giebe dam can be refilled. When these dams are full, it gives the town a buffer of three months, instead of a few weeks as is the situation at present.

“This is the most viable approach over the short term while council investigates and implements longer-term solutions which would include the construction of another dam, a pipeline and groundwater extraction.”

Apart from the Water Awareness Campaign, which is aimed to inform, educate and motivate, the municipality has approved budget for a Leak Repair Programme in the outer suburbs. Water leaks can be reported to 044 302 6331.

“We have serviced the reverse osmosis plant and although it is operational it is not yet at full capacity. After the new inlet system has been completed in the next month or two, the plant will contribute another 2 megalitres to the system,” said Mayor Wolmarans.

“This would even out supply with regards to demand, but not contribute to the replenishment of our reserve storage – the need to conserve water and reduce consumption would remain indefinitely.

“I am excited to reveal that in the coming weeks we will publish a comprehensive guide explaining Knysna’s water system and infrastructure. We are also considering an incentive programme where we will identify the most conscientious users and reward them accordingly. Watch the press for further developments and information.

“We will continue with internal campaigns in the municipality and introduce educational sessions with all stakeholders – schools, créches, businesses, institutions, etc.

“It is however clear that we need to institute further punitive measures on consumers who are using too much water and have made no effort to reduce usage. To the few culprits out there: consider this your final chance to make a positive change. Ideally we would like to see consumption levels of around 15 to 20 kilolitres per household per month.”

The water restrictions in place require residents to only water their gardens at dusk between 18:00 and 19:00 on designated days: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for houses with even numbers, and Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for houses with odd numbers.

Residents are further encouraged to only use tap water for domestic consumption, not for the filling of swimming pools.

Long-term water conservation, the only solution

Knysna Director of Planning & Development Resigns

The Director for Planning and Development, Mr. Mike Maughan-Brown, resigned at the end of March.

“It is with sadness in my heart that I confirm Mike Maughan-Brown has resigned from his position as Director for Town Planning and Development,” said Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans. “He has been a valuable member of the team and will be sorely missed. I, along with all of his friends and colleagues at the municipality, wish him well with his future endeavours when he leaves us at the end of May.”

As is standard practice Mr. Maughan-Brown personally handed his resignation with two months’ notice to Knysna’s Municipal Manager, Mr. Grant Easton, on 30 March 2016.

“Mike Maughan-Brown has been a loyal and valued public servant to all Knysna residents during his time with the municipality. He has been an asset, often going beyond the call of duty.”

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“Mike Maughan-Brown has been a loyal and valued public servant to all Knysna residents during his time with the municipality. He has been an asset, often going beyond the call of duty.”
South Africa celebrates 22 years of freedom on Freedom Day, 27 April. This year’s Freedom Day is of great significance as citizens have recently celebrated 20 years of the South African Constitution. The theme for the 2016 Freedom Month celebrations is “Celebrating our freedom and democracy through radical economic transformation”.

The 22 years of democracy in the country coincide not only with the 20 years of our Constitution, but with the local government elections. Citizens are afforded the right to choose who they want to entrust with the affairs of their municipalities. This is an exercise that in many African countries still remains a pipe dream. All residents are encouraged to register with the IEC for the upcoming local government elections.

The month of April is not only an opportunity to celebrate 20 years of the Constitution, democracy and freedom, but it is also a time to reflect on how our country’s democracy and freedom was attained, the advancements that have been made over the last two decades and how all citizens should work as a collective to move our country forward.

### Celebrating Freedom month

- **Veldfire Prevention Through Fire Breaks**

### By-law Relating to Community Fire Safety

Council approved the by-law relating to community fire safety on Monday 28 March. We will publish extracts of the by-law in this newsletter during the next few months. Residents are also encouraged to visit our website at www.knysna.gov.za to access the full document.

The focus for this edition is on **Veldfire Prevention Through Fire Breaks.**

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**ONWETTIGE ELEKTRISITEIT KONNEKSIES**

- **Elektrisiteit kan baie gevaarlik wees as dit nie reg gebruik word nie, of deur 'n ongekwalifiseerde persoon geïnstalleer word.**
  - Die risiko is veral groot vir klein kindertjies, en baie is reeds doodgeskok deur onwettige aansluitings.

- **Die lê van drade van 'n kliënt se kragbord om krag aan ander gebruikers te verskaf, of die omseiling van die munisipaliteit se kragborde of beskermende toestelle, is streng verbode.**
  - Akukho mntu uvumeleke ukuba asebenze ngombane kamasipala engagunyaziswa okanye athengisele abanye abantu umbane ngaphandle kwesigunyaziso.

- **Geen ongemagtigde persoon word toegelaat om aan munisipale kragaansluitingspunte te werk of krag aan ander mense te verkoop nie.**
  - Akukho mntu uvumeleke ukuba asebenze ngombane kamasipala engagunyaziswa okanye athengisele abanye abantu umbane ngaphandle kwesigunyaziso.

- **Elektrisiteitsdiefstal is onwettig en kan tot kriminele klagtes lei.**
  - Akukho mntu uvumeleke ukuba asebenze ngombane kamasipala engagunyaziswa okanye athengisele abanye abantu umbane ngaphandle kwesigunyaziso.

- **Elektrisiteitsdiefstal kan naamloos aan die munisipaliteit se elektrisiteitsafdeling rapporteer word by 044 302 6397.**
  - Ukuhiwa kombane kungaxelwa ngaphandle kokuhankanya igama lakho kwicandelo lombane kuMasipala kule nombolo yomnxeba (044) 302 6397.
After climate change, alien invasive plants pose the most serious threat to our habitats by destroying bio-diversity. Bio-diversity is the link between all organisms on earth, binding each into an inter-dependant ecosystem. Intact eco-systems ensure the sustainable productivity of soils and provide the genetic resources for all plants and animals on the planet and have a direct impact on all our lives. The loss in biodiversity means millions of people face a future where food supplies are more vulnerable to pests and disease, poor growing conditions and probable water shortages. Here is just one of the reasons why;

### What it does to our water resources

It is estimated that nationwide invading plants use 3.3 billion cubic meters of water per year beyond what native plants would require. Total annual runoff from mountain catchment areas and high yield riparian zones could eventually be reduced by at least 16% if alien plants are allowed to continue to spread.

### Dates to Remember - Municipal Meetings 2016

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<tr>
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<td>Budget Public Participation Meeting: Wards 9 &amp; 10</td>
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<td>Ordinary Council Meeting</td>
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### Dates to Remember - Commemorative Days & Events

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<td>15 May</td>
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<td>30 April</td>
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**VELDFIRE PREVENTION THROUGH FIRE BREAKS**

1. **Duty to prepare and maintain firebreaks**

   (1) Every owner on whose land a veldfire may start or burn or from whose land it may spread must prepare and maintain a firebreak on his or her side of the boundary between his or her land and any adjoining land:

   (a) For light and medium fuels the fire break must be a minimum of three (3) metres wide.

   (b) For heavy fuels the fire break must be a minimum of six (6) metres wide.

   (2) If an owner referred to in subsection (1) intends to prepare and maintain a firebreak by burning, he or she must determine a mutually agreeable date or dates with the owners of adjoining land for doing so, providing that Subsection 40 (4) is complied with and the fire protection association for the area is informed.

   (3) An owner may not burn a firebreak, despite having complied with subsection (2), if:

   (a) the controlling authority objects to the proposed burning; or

   (b) the fire protection association objects to the proposed burning; or

   (c) a warning has been published because the fire danger is high in the region; or

   (d) the conditions are not conducive to the burning of firebreaks.

2. **Requirements for firebreaks**

   An owner who is obliged to prepare and maintain a firebreak must ensure that, with due regard to the weather, climate, terrain and vegetation of the area:

   (a) it is wide enough and long enough to have a reasonable chance of preventing a veldfire from spreading to or from neighbouring land;

   (b) it does not cause soil erosion; and

   (c) it is reasonably free of inflammable material capable of carrying a veldfire across it.

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**The Green Column**

After climate change, alien invasive plants pose the most serious threat to our habitats by destroying bio-diversity. Bio-diversity is the link between all organisms on earth, binding each into an inter-dependant ecosystem. Intact eco-systems ensure the sustainable productivity of soils and provide the genetic resources for all plants and animals on the planet and have a direct impact on all our lives. The loss in biodiversity means millions of people face a future where food supplies are more vulnerable to pests and disease, poor growing conditions and probable water shortages. Here is just one of the reasons why;

• The Mantis public awareness campaign: Alien Invasive Plants
• Care for your environment – your life depends on it!
• Alien Invasive Plants and the damage they do to our environment.

What it does to our water resources

It is estimated that nationwide invading plants use 3.3 billion cubic meters of water per year beyond what native plants would require. Total annual runoff from mountain catchment areas and high yield riparian zones could eventually be reduced by at least 16% if alien plants are allowed to continue to spread.

www.invasives.org.za