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 8,3% and electricity at 7,6%.

**From the Mayor’s Pen**

May is the month when we celebrate our democracy. It is a month to reflect on how much South Africa has come since April 1994. It is a time to ensure that our democracy is protected and advanced.

I believe that the freedom of the press is a key component of a democracy. Without it, a government can easily become unchecked and self-serving. I am encouraged by the growth of media freedom in South Africa. Many of our newspapers are stronger than ever and are able to hold the government accountable.

The anti-corruption campaign has also made progress. I believe that this is crucial to ensure that our freedom is protected and that our democracy is not undermined. Corruption can erode trust in government and erode the fabric of society.

There is still work to be done. We must continue to fight corruption and work to ensure that democracy is protected. We must also continue to support the media and ensure that they are able to do their job.

I believe that this is something we should all reflect on. It is a time to celebrate our democracy and to work to ensure that it is protected for future generations.

I am proud of the progress we have made. I am proud of South Africa. I am proud of our democracy.

**Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans**