Dear residents,

The month of March started on a positive note, as Council appointed a new Municipal Manager: Knysna-born and raised Dr Sitembele Wiseman Vatala. Congratulations, Dr Vatala, and welcome back to your home base. We look forward to working with you to make Knysna the shining light of the Western Cape.

Human Rights Day is observed in March. This day commemorates the lives lost during the events that took place in Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. The day serves as a reminder of what we have achieved in our journey towards freedom and equality, and the cost paid for it. Former president Nelson Mandela said: “To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity”. Treasure what you have today. Own it, live it and use it responsibly.

With national elections around the corner, the political arena is heating up. Whilst we understand the need to make your voice heard, I ask you to do so responsibly. We’ve had some protests in the area recently. This is also one of your human rights, but I ask that you respect the law and abide by the protest rules at all times. Disrupting services and damaging buildings placed there to serve your community does not achieve anything. This council is always open to reasonable requests and, if the correct channels are followed, we can work together to resolve issues.

Remember, this is the year of opportunity – use it well!

‘til next month …

MARK WILLEMSE
EXECUTIVE MAYOR

NEW KNYSNA MUNICIPAL MANAGER APPOINTED

Council resolved to appoint Knysna-born and raised Dr Sitembele Wiseman Vatala as the new Knysna Municipal Manager (MM) during the Knysna Council meeting of 28 February this year.

“We are extremely pleased to have appointed Dr Vatala. He boasts an impressive CV and has a wealth of institutional knowledge and experience. Council firmly believes that he is the person we have been waiting for to steer Knysna into greatness,” said Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse.

Prior to joining Knysna’s municipal fold, Dr Vatala led the Emalahleni Local Municipality, Eastern Cape. Within two years of his time there as MM, he managed to change that municipality’s Audit Opinion from seven years of Disclaimers, to Qualified Audit...
Opinion and, finally, to an Unqualified Audit Opinion - which was sustained until 2019.

Before his appointment as the MM at Emalahleni Municipality, Dr Vatala filled the post of Director: Integrated Development Planning (IDP), Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Knowledge Management (KM) at the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality. He gained valuable experience in strategic thinking, forward planning, stakeholder engagement, public participation, regional and national perspective of socio-economic development, policy development and implementation, public financial management, human resource and organisational development, and legislative frameworks.

"Besides his numerous degrees, certificates and diplomas, Dr Vatala holds a PhD in Financial Autonomy and Viability of Local Government for Cost Effective and Efficient Service Delivery on Selected Municipalities in South Africa. This qualification will stand him in good stead as he takes over the reins and manages Knysna Municipality," said Willemse. “I believe that the appointment of Dr Vatala will help us realise our objectives for 2019. I believe that he will strive to put the needs of the people of Knysna first.”

Asked if he has any immediate plans for Knysna Municipality, Dr Vatala responded: “Before I start bringing about any changes, I will need to have bilateral engagements with internal stakeholders so that I can have a better understanding of the challenges facing the greater Knysna municipal area. I will have a substantial draft plan after these engagements, which I will present to the Institutional Strategic Planning Session scheduled to be held in April 2019.”

Dr Vatala expressed his gratitude for having gone full circle to now return to his beloved Knysna. “Greater Knysna is one of the most beautiful areas in the world and I should know, as I have travelled and worked abroad. It is such a privilege to return to my hometown and I can’t wait to roll up my sleeves and get Knysna Municipality back to being among the best-managed municipalities in the country. My aim is to ensure that Knysna Municipality shines as an organisation that is Inclusive, Innovative and Inspired.”

Subject to the conclusion of an employment contract and concurrence from the Provincial Minister of Local Government, Dr Vatala is set to commence duty on 1 April.

Applications for indigent rebates are now open and must be submitted on or before 31 May 2019. Knysna Municipality calls on qualifying residents and senior citizens who fall within the indigent category and who are municipal account holders, to re-apply for rebates on their property rates and services for the 2019/20 financial year.

Qualifying criteria:
• total gross household income must not exceed R5100 per month;

• the account should be in your name or your spouse’s name; and

• deceased estates must be in your parents’ or spouse’s name.

Pensioners who registered during 2018/2019 do not have to re-apply. However, new pensioners need to apply.

The following documents must be submitted by all applicants:
• municipal account;
• South African Identity Document;
• proof of income (SASSA cards / salary slips / bank statements etc.);
• proof of unemployment (affidavit); and
• SARS / taxpayer’s reference number, if available.

To obtain more information and application forms, customers may visit their nearest municipal office or contact the municipality’s Credit Control Office on 044 302 6482 or 6581.

APPLICATIONS FOR 2019
INDIGENT / SOCIAL REBATES NOW OPEN

DATES TO REMEMBER

MUNICIPAL MEETING

28 March Ordinary Council Meeting

2 April Finance Committee Meeting

3 April Governance & Economic Development Committee Meeting

9 April Community Services Committee Meeting

10 April Technical Services Committee Meeting

11 April Planning & IHS Committee Meeting

COMMEMORATIVE DAYS & EVENTS

21 March Human Rights’ Day

27 – 28 March Knysna Women’s Forum

30 March Hornlee Musix Experience

9 April – 14 May Ellen Pakkies Movie Community Outreach
Knysna Municipality rolled out the installation of 7500 water meters in seven of the municipal wards. A duly appointed service provider will complete these installations within approximately four months.

Technical Services Chairperson Councillor Leavel Davis explained that these water meters have shown great results in other areas in the Western Cape. “This technology has been rolled out in the Cape Town Metro, Mossel Bay and Theewaterskloof municipalities with great success.

“The water management devices have various advantages to the consumers and the municipality. These include saving water, revenue enhancement, clear water usage measurement, decreasing the number of disputed accounts, improving the management of water resources and assisting Council with long-term planning.”

“Our indigent households will still receive the 6-kilolitre free allocation per month. The water management devices will be programmed to provide a daily allotment of 200 litres per day. Savings will accumulate if the allotted water is not used within a month. Once this allotted amount has been used, the devise will automatically switch on the prepaid system.

“Water is a precious resource. We encourage households to conserve usage and explore the advantages of using grey water for other domestic uses, such as gardening.”

Cllr Davis said that the installation project will create temporary job opportunities for local people. “The contractor will employ approximately 50 people within the greater Knysna municipal area and train them. This is not just a great opportunity for employment, but for transferring of skills and creating potential future job opportunities.”

Knysna Municipality has introduced two new features to its mobile app. An anti-fraud and corruption feature and a business portal were both activated at the beginning of March.

The anti-fraud and corruption feature allows for the anonymous reporting of fraud and corruption within the municipality. This feature is available under the Governance icon on the app.

We are excited to announce that businesses within the greater Knysna municipal area can now be listed on the app under the Business Listings icon. This is a great, free of charge, marketing opportunity for businesses big and small.

The app was launched in 2016 and has been positively received by residents. It offers users a new, effective way in which to receive important communication, log complaints, view municipal accounts, follow our Twitter feed and much more.

The Knysna Municipal App is available in all app stores and is compatible with smart and non-smart phones. Download the app today and share it with your friends, family and contacts. Also available on http://knysna.community.me

The municipality has announced that it will lower water restrictions from Level 3 to Level 1 with immediate effect. The decision to relax the restrictions was based on the slight increase in rainfall, better storage capacity and reduced consumption.

The welcome relaxation of the restrictions was announced by Mayor Mark Willemse during the Mayoral Committee meeting of 6 March.

Level 1 water restrictions allow:

- for the watering of gardens for one hour 3 days a week;
- for the use of hosepipes for gardening and other purposes, and the use of irrigation systems from 18h00 to 19h00 during December to May (Summer) and 17h00 to 18h00 during June to November (Winter), as follows:
  - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays – residents with even street numbers;
  - Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays – residents with odd street numbers; and
- that residents still obtain permission from the Director: Technical Services before filling swimming pools and undertaking maintenance.

Residents and businesses must take note that we are still experiencing a drought and that responsible consumption to protect our natural resources must become our way of life.
SMME INCUBATOR SUCCESSFULLY GROWING SMALL BUSINESS, BOOSTING THE ECONOMY AND CREATING JOBS.

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