FROM THE MAYOR’S PEN

Dear Reader,

As we celebrate Freedom Day on 27 April, I ask that you take some time to remember those who gave of themselves to ensure that we, as South Africans, may now enjoy freedom and live our lives with dignity.

Over the years I have found myself asking the question - What does Freedom mean? My understanding is that freedom is a condition in which people have the opportunity to speak and act freely, and pursue happiness without unnecessary external restrictions. Freedom, to me, is important because it leads to enhanced expressions of creativity and original thought, increased productivity, and an overall high quality of life.

Our Tata Madiba explained his thoughts on freedom. “For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” Bearing this in mind, I ask that we celebrate South Africa’s first non-racial democratic elections in 1994 by displaying respect and tolerance for the diversity of all who live within our country.

Philosopher Harley Hahn once said that the idea of freedom is complex, and “must be redefined and defended anew by each generation”. Moreover, those with a sense of the past and a highly developed understanding of human nature can fully understand the true value of freedom. All too often, people who live in freedom tend to ignore its fragility and take it for granted. Conversely, people not raised within a long-standing tradition of freedom often have trouble understanding and implementing it in their society.

I share Hahn’s sentiment that there is no such thing as absolute freedom, especially within countries. “All freedom requires compromise between the rights of the individual and the goals and obligations of the state. As a result, there are many laws, regulations and judicial pronouncements regarding the ideals of freedom and the details of how it is to be practiced,” he said.

I ask each one of us to recognise and respect the freedom that we enjoy as well as the laws which ensure that we do this with dignity. Share your understanding of the meaning of freedom with your fellow man. In doing so, I am sure that we can soon find common ground that will lead to tolerance.

Allow me to leave you with these words: “We were expected to destroy one another and ourselves collectively in the worst racial conflagration. Instead, we as a people chose the path of negotiation, compromise and peaceful settlement. Instead of hatred and revenge we chose reconciliation and nation-building.” Nelson Mandela.

We chose peace and with that peace, came freedom.

Kind Regards,

Eleanore Bouw-Spies
Executive Mayor
KNYSNA MUNICIPALITY’S DRAFT BUDGET TABLED

Knysna Executive Mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies tabled the Draft Budget for Knysna Municipality during a Special Council Meeting on March 29.

"The total funded capital projects for the 2018/2019 financial year amounts to R148 million, with the main focus on the following:- water Infrastructure - R38.6 million, electricity - R30.4 million, sanitation - R27.7 million, refuse removal - R1.5 million and roads Infrastructure R10.7 million. The capital budget will be funded by means of grants from National Government to the amount of R42.2 million, Provincial Grants to the amount of R10 million, Loan funding to the amount of R65.9 million and own funding to the amount of R29.8 million."

The Executive Mayor also highlighted the proposed tariff increases. "Revenue sources remain under strain and, in an attempt to balance service delivery with affordability, proposed tariff increases have been limited as follows; electricity 6.83% (as confirmed by the National Energy Regulator of South Africa), water 7.5%, refuse removal 5.3%, and assessment rates 2.2%.”

The draft budget is now accessible for public comment in all wards across Greater Knysna, allowing submissions to be made by all communities. The final budget will be presented to Council towards the end of May for consideration and approval.

GREEN COLUMN: STARTING A MOVEMENT – CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

There’s an event in nature called The Flamingo Phenomenon: when it’s time for a flock of flamingoes to migrate, about three or four of the birds fly up and flap and squawk, but this doesn’t capture the attention of the flock, so they settle back down and ‘talk amongst themselves’. A few days later, about nine or ten of them fly up, flapping and squawking once again... but this is still not quite enough, so they settle back down and ‘talk further’. Another few days later, about 25 of them fly up and do the same, but this time their collective calling is enough to get the whole flock interested, and off they fly as a group.

Taking a lesson from this, BioWise has introduced a “Champions of Change” approach at the Knysna Municipality as part of the recently launched Waste Nothing Knysna programme. ‘Champions’ have been identified in each department to be the drivers of change in the workplace, inspiring and empowering others to follow suit in ‘thinking outside of the box’ when it comes to the use of our resources. They’ll learn how by actually doing it!

The main municipal building is itself to become a ‘flapping flamingo’ as we undertake, over time, to turn it into a ‘bio-wise’ building that is energy-efficient, where not a drop of water is wasted and where all waste is turned into a resource. The municipal Champions of Change will work together on this and apply the lessons learned back in their own departments. We’ll follow their journey and share their lessons along the way.

Waste Nothing Knysna was launched earlier this month and the same champions approach will be used for business and tourism establishments as well as the 15 schools that have entered the BioWise school competition. They will all become our ‘flapping flamingoes’, helping to get the ‘bio-wise’ groundswell movement going!

Anyone interested in becoming a Champion of Change, please contact Sue on sue@biowise.org.za - and let’s start flapping.

BUDGET & IDP PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Knysna Municipality has embarked on a public participation process in respect of its 2018/2019 Draft Budget and draft five-year Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The Draft Budget and draft IDP documentation is available at the municipal offices, libraries and on the municipality’s website (www.knysna.gov.za). Communities are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the content.

“I urge all members of the public, ward committees and other relevant stakeholders to ensure they attend the public meetings, participate fully and make meaningful and valuable contributions in the budgeting process. It has been brought to my attention that certain groups have previously not participated in the municipality’s transparent engagement processes in the past and opted to utilise the media to share their input. I cannot stress the importance of our residents’ input enough and therefore encourage all to participate in these public engagements. Your voice is important to us and I look forward to hearing it,” says Knysna Executive Mayor Eleanore Bouw-Spies.

The schedule for the public meetings is available on page 4 of this newsletter or the municipal website, social media pages and advertised in the local media.

WATER WEEK CHANGES MINDS

Celebrating National Water Week, Knysna Municipality’s Environmental Management Department hosted a number of educational activities at local primary and high schools. This year National Water Week was celebrated from 18 – 24 March, with the theme: ‘Access to safe water by 2030 – possible through nature.’

“Everyone can make a difference; including children. It does not matter how big or small the effort. We need to start initiating behavioural change in relation to water conservation at an early age. I am glad that the department has targeted young people for this campaign,” said Mayoral Committee Member for Technical Services, Cllr Levael Davis.

Activities included a guided tour of the Water Treatment Works on Thursday 22 March for Concordia High School learners, whilst on Monday 26 March, learners from Fraaisig, Horneel and Sunriddle Primary Schools were treated to a fun filled educational theatre show. The production focussed on water conservation.

Davis said, “We would like to remind our residents that water restrictions are still in place. We appeal to everyone to use water sparingly and help us to extend the availability of the existing supply of water.”

National Water Week is an awareness campaign that serves as a powerful mechanism reiterating the value of water, the need for sustainable management of this scarce resource, and the critical role adequate water supply plays in our communities.
**Water SAVING TIPS**

- Take short showers
- Fix leaks
- Use a pool cover
- Water your garden using borehole water
- Water your garden at night
- Install water saving toilets

**Report water leaks to**
044 302 6331

**Report water abuse**
WhatsApp: 060 998 7000

**Report illegal dumping**
WhatsApp: 081 556 9374

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**REMEMBER TO RECYCLE**

We urge all residents within Greater Knysna to reduce refuse, by reusing containers for food storage, minimising the purchase of single-use items (such as take-away coffee cups, plastic straws and plastic cutlery) and recycling/upcycling wherever possible. For inspiration and ideas, visit https://zerowastehome.com, which documents one family’s mission to become a zero waste household. The image on the right is their entire waste for 2017!

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**DATES TO DIARISE**

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