



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 27 July 2015
EMBARGO: Immediate

Knysna welcomes new DA Councillors

Two newly elected Democratic Alliance (DA) Ward Councillors, Mark Willemse (Ward 9), and Peter Myers (Ward 10) were welcomed into the Knysna Council during a Special Council Meeting on Friday, July 24 at 10:00.

Following the resignation of the Ward 9 councillor, Michelle Wasserman, and Ward 10's Richard Dawson, a by-election was held on Wednesday, July 22.

Myers ensured that the DA won Ward 10 with a majority of 99.15 per cent (1 397 of the total 1 409 votes cast). Although Ward 9 was hotly contested the DA won the election with Willemse receiving 68.98 per cent of the votes (1 301 of the total 1 886 votes cast).

To complete the process of their inauguration the two councillors repeated the Oath and Affirmation as read by The Knysna Municipality Manager of Legal Services, Melony Paulsen. Once the documents were duly signed the Knysna Executive Mayor, Georlene Wolmarans, ANC Chief Whip, Stephen de Vries and Cope Councillor, Elrick van Aswegen welcomed Myers and Willemse into Council.

Addressing Willemse and Myers Wolmarans said: "I got to know you both as devoted individuals who know the value of hard work and sacrifice and the importance of giving back to your community. Today I would like to assure you both that you will have the support of your colleagues who share your love for Knysna and your passion for public service."

She lauded Myers for his experience as Constituency Chairman and said that his knowledge and skills put him in a strong position to immediately make a positive contribution to the DA's ability to deliver an even more capacitated and effective local government for Knysna. "Your understanding of local government will allow you to address the many issues and concerns of residents in Knysna and specifically those concerning ward 10 that covers the central town area."

Wolmarans thanked Willemse for the many years he has been involved in various charities within the Greater Knysna. "What started off for Mark as a small contribution to making the lives of a few a little easier, has now escalated into a project of serving the community at large," she said.

"The two of you take office after years of economic decline and having been chosen as Wards 9 and 10 councillors, this is just the beginning of your long journey," Wolmarans said. She added that she knows that the councillors will not fix everything that needs to be fixed overnight. "You will have to work long and hard, you will have to be smart, and you will have to focus on those changes that will make a real and lasting difference."

In closing she advised the new councillors to "Ensure that you never lose sight of what your community needs and struggles are, and help them solve these issues. I ask you to avail yourselves to each and every member of your community, making Knysna truly a town where people and nature prosper."

Van Aswegen welcomed the new councillors and echoed the Mayor's advice, saying that Myers and Willemse have a difficult job ahead of them, especially in making Knysna more economically viable.

In his welcome and congratulations to Myers and Willemse, De Vries told the new DA councillors that he and his ANC colleagues look forward to continuing the vigorous debates that had taken place during the electioneering process.

Both Myers and Willemse thanked all for welcoming them into Council and said that they were looking forward to their term in office. Willemse said that he was looking forward to continuing the debates that the ANC had started during their Ward 9 campaign. "I never stand back for a challenge," he said.

Following Van Aswegen saying that the councillors must be looking forward to removing their photographs from the lamp posts, Myers responded: "I am going to leave those posters up for as long as possible. When my daughter arrived back to school after the holidays, her teacher asked what had happened during her holiday. She said that her Dad had become famous!"

The Special Council Meeting concluded and attendees were given the opportunity to meet the new Councillors.

ENDS

CAPTIONS

Photo 1:

New Knysna Municipal Ward 9 Councillor, Mark Willemse being sworn in by Manager Legal Services Melony Paulsen, during a Special Council Meeting on Friday, July 24.

Photo 2:

Peter Myers, Knysna Municipal Ward 10 Councillor being led through the Solemn Affirmation by Manager Legal Services Melony Paulsen.

Photo 3:

Ward 9 and 10 recently elected councillors were welcomed into the Knysna Council on Friday, July 24. From left: Cllr Eleonore Bouw-Spies (Speaker), Cllr Mark Willemse (Ward 9), Knysna Executive Mayor, Georlene Wolmarans, Cllr Peter Myers (Ward 10) and Knysna Executive Deputy-Mayor, Esmé Edge.

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