FROM THE MAYOR’S PEN

Dear Reader,

As we celebrate Human Rights day on 21 March, I would like to encourage you to understand your human rights as set out in our constitution. This will help you defend yourself should your rights be violated in any way.

Do you know that our South African Constitution is celebrated globally for its visionary Bill of Rights? Our Bill of Rights which forms part of this Constitution integrates economic, social and cultural rights alongside traditional, civil and political rights as legally enforceable rights.

If you think that your rights, have been violated in any way, you can and should report the matter. For instance, if someone treats you differently because of your race, gender, age or ethnic group, your right to equality is being abused or violated.

All Human Rights violations can be reported to the;
• South African Human Rights Commission
• Independent Police Investigative Directorate
• Public Protector
• Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
• Commission on Gender Equality

This Bill of Rights is the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, so please make sure that you learn all about your rights.

In this newsletter we share with you what the municipality is doing to ensure some of your human rights are fulfilled. We discuss a fresh perspective on water conservation, a reminder about the indigent rebate applications, CCTV Project launch of 11 more cameras in Knysna CBD and the Easter Refuse Collection roster.

We further discuss how you can view your municipal bill on our Municipal MobiApp and also introduce you to the Western Cape Human Settlements online portal.

Enjoy this month’s Council News and I hope that you will spend Human Rights Day sharing the importance of the Bill of Rights with your loved ones and those who are not aware of the importance of this chapter in our Constitution.

Kind Regards,

Eleanore Bouw-Spies
Executive Mayor
KNYSNA CCTV PROJECT LAUNCHES 11 MORE CAMERAS IN KNYSNA CBD

The Knysna Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Project is pleased to announce the addition of 11 more CCTV cameras in the Knysna CBD. This was made possible by Ward 10 Councillor Peter Myers and handed over to a further R 315 000 towards the CCTV Project from the Ward Allocation Budget.

Councillor Myers said, "I am delighted that the Ward 10 Committee has once again showed its commitment to this project by donating from the Ward Allocation Grant. The Committee and I recognise that this project is doing very well, in particular the four cameras installed at the intersection of Main and Grey Streets in September 2016, which have led to arrests and proven invaluable in assisting in crime prevention."

Mike Elliot, the Chairman of the Knysna CCTV Project, a non-profit organisation (NPO), said "We again approached Councillor Peter Myers and the Ward 10 committee for funding from their Ward Allocation Grant. A generous allocation was received to enable the installation of a further eleven cameras, together with the monitoring and response for 12 months."

"The support and assistance received by the Knysna Municipality has been invaluable throughout this project and the committee thanks Mr Steven Langlands for going the extra mile to ensure its success."

APPLICATIONS FOR INDIGENT REBATES NOW OPEN

Applications for indigent rebates are now open and will be submitted up until 31 May 2018. The Knysna Municipality calls upon senior citizens and residents who fall within the Council’s Indigent category and who are municipal account holders, to re-apply for rebates on their property rates and services for the 2018/19 financial year.

In terms of Council’s policy, households who currently receive a collective monthly income of less than R4 300 qualify for rebates on rates and service charges. (This threshold will be reviewed during Council’s new budget process).

To qualify for the rebates:
• The applicant must be a resident of the Greater Knysna Municipal area;
• The applicant must be in possession of a valid South African identity document;
• The combined or joint gross income of all occupants or dependents in a single household which receives services from the municipality should not exceed R4 300. Child support and foster care grant should not form part of the household income;
• Where there are income earning tenants or any other income earning people living on the property, that income has to be declared on the application form;
• The applicant must be the owner who receives municipal services;
• The Indigent subsidy is limited to one occupied property;
• The Indigent subsidy will not apply to vacant stands;
• In terms of estate accounts, the existing account will continue under the indigent relief measures, on condition that only the surviving spouse or dependent children may apply, provided that the death certificate be submitted to qualify for the continued support. An application for the continuance of the indigent relief must be submitted.

Residents who have outstanding balances and would like to apply for the rebate, should either pay their account balances in full or at least have a payment arrangement with the municipality in place before their applications will be considered. These applicants need to continue paying, even after the rebate is granted, as the municipality will not write off any existing debt.

The application window is now open until 31 May 2018, and the application process comes into effect from 1 July 2018. Once a rebate is granted, it will be valid for one year. Residents, including existing recipients, need to re-apply for rebates every financial year.

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

WATER CONSERVATION: A FRESH PERSPECTIVE. BE WATER-WISE - PLANT THE RAIN

BY SUE SWAIN OF BIOWISE

The Day Zero threat looming over Cape Town has been dominating the headlines the last few weeks. What isn’t as widely known is that Cape Town receives FOUR TIMES the water it consumes annually as rain on the city. But, like all other cities and towns, that precious, fresh, life-giving water simply gets channelled away as quickly as possible into stormwater drains, to be discharged into the ocean, having picked up masses of litter and pollutants along the way!

In Knysna it is no different and our water resources are often under pressure. If we take our cue from the forests around us, we will ‘plant’ that rain. In a forest, all the different layers of taller and shorter trees, shrubs, ferns and mosses, serve to slow rainfall down, ensuring that up to 50% of that rain gets ‘planted’ into the ground and that only 5% runs off into the rivers. That is how a forest keeps moist, hydrated and able to withstand droughts and resist fires in all but the most extreme of situations.

Closer to home, how can we ‘plant’ the rain and minimize the run off? The best way to assess this is to go outside when it rains to see what is happening to your stormwater, identify other run-off areas and work out how you can re-direct that water into your garden.

In town we could start to replace our solid paved areas with planted-up swales that will soak up the rainwater, add beauty and help cool the town in the summer heat. Runoff from our streets can then be channelled into these rather than into stormwater pipes.

It may sound like a moutainous task, but if we come together as a community and break it up into ‘bite-size chunks’ it is certainly doable – “many hands make light work!” Ward committees could identify a section at a time and work parties of residents could make it happen. This could be done in hours and days, not weeks and months!

There is an excellent TED talk on the topic that will provide all the inspiration needed (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xO2Zp1mik).

CHECK YOUR HOUSING APPLICATIONS STATUS ONLINE

The Western Cape Government’s Human Settlements Department has introduced a new online function to assist subsidy applications in tracking their housing applications. Applicants may check the status of their housing application using their ID number.

Access to the portal is made easy via the municipal website homepage www.knysna.gov.za or alternatively visit www.westerncape.gov.za/dept/human-settlements

The online system is a quick and convenient way for residents to check their application status. This is another great initiative that brings government services closer to its people through innovation.

Residents may also make use of the municipality’s internet access at our Libraries.
YOU CAN NOW ACCESS YOUR MONTHLY ACCOUNT ON OUR MOBILE APP

Greater Knysna residents may now enjoy the convenience of viewing their municipal account on the Municipality’s Mobile App.

To view your account on the App, use the following steps:
• Login
• Click on statements icon on your menu bar
• Capture your account details
• Click on the verify button

For the Best App Experience please complete your profile information in the App, so we can ensure you receive communications and services that are relevant to you.

The more information you share with us, the more personalised we can make your App experience.

Download our community App available on all app stores or visit http://knysna.comunity.me

WATER SECURITY ADDRESSED IN GREATER KNYSNA

"We must remain mindful that water is a valuable and scarce resource across the world, and therefore it is of paramount importance that we all start to embrace the value of this scarce commodity," says Knysna Executive Mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies.

To this end, the municipality is developing a long term water resilience. Many of the short-term initiatives are beginning to yield positive results, albeit marginal at this stage.

The municipality has already embarked on numerous projects which include:
• Increasing our ability to extract and store water from the Knysna River through a pipeline project in the Charlesford Water Scheme;
• Leak repairs;
• Installing water meters to manage demand;
• Extraction of ground water through additional boreholes;
• New sources such as the Bongani Springs;
• Repairs to the RO and Desalination Plants; and
• Extracting water from the quarry.

In addition, the municipality is in the planning phases of developing infrastructure renewal projects and other large capital projects.

Municipal Manager, Kam Chetty explained that the Moderate Restriction in the Greater Knysna acknowledges the stress on the water system, and limits households to 20 000 litres of water per month. Other measures include restriction on watering gardens, the washing of cars/boats, and the water us in artificial water features.

Please report any water abuse or leaks to: 060 998 7000

REFUSE COLLECTION: EASTER WEEKEND

Please note that there will be no refuse removal on Easter/ Good Friday (30 March).

Refuse removal schedule is as follows for the Easter weekend:
Knysna: Belvidere, Old Place, Westford
Residential: Thursday, 29 March
Businesses: Saturday, 31 March

Sedgefield: Cola and Myoli Beach, Extension 3 and 4, Zeegezicht
Residential and businesses: Thursday, 29 March

All refuse needing collection should be put on the pavement before 8 am

Illegal dumping can be reported to: 081 556 9374.