Dear residents,

It is already the second month of 2020, a year which has not started without challenges. Figures contained in reports in November and December showed that there was a significant cash flow issue developing. It was clear that we needed to introduce a turnaround strategy with immediate effect to address the causes and alleviate pressure on the Municipal finances.

Various factors contributed to the shortfall, which have been identified and once Council approves the cash flow management plan, it will be implemented with immediate effect, alleviating the pressure. It aims to restore cash reserves and to maintain a strong cash flow position. In turn, the municipality will be back on a sustainable footing and an effective and efficient organisation that is financially stable, providing sustainable services to the community.

The current state of our cash flow forced us to get tough on overdue Knysna municipal accounts – implementing strict measures to receive payment, or stop services. We have no other option but to act immediately should payment terms not be adhered to.

On a more positive note, I want to congratulate the Directorate: Infrastructure Services on their first runner up award in the category “Best Waste Water Treatment Works (less than 5 Mega-litre/day)” for the Sedgefield Waste Water Treatment Works. Read more about their achievement on page 2 of this edition.

We are also excited about the municipality’s Grey Street Project, which will start soon. It is an integral part of Knysna Municipality’s Central Business District Renewal Programme (CBDRP) and funded by the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). The goal of the CBDRP is to build, restore, renew and enhance the central business district. I want to ask residents and affected businesses to please be patient – the end product will be worth the short-term discomfort!

Last but certainly not least, we celebrate Human Rights Day on 21 March, during which we are reminded of the costs of freedom. When you celebrate this day think about what it stands for, and remember Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s words: “Never let anyone tell you that what you are doing is insignificant.” We all have a role to play in our society!

’Till next month.

AUBREY TSENGWA, EXECUTIVE DEPUTY MAYOR

LOAD SHEDDING SCHEDULE

According to Eskom load shedding is expected to remain for the next 18 months, while critical maintenance is done to restore ageing electrical infrastructure.

While Eskom does not strictly keep to load shedding time tables, it is possible to find your area’s status and schedule online at www.loadshedding.eskom.co.za. An extract is also available on the municipal website at https://www.knysna.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Load-shedding-Stages-1-4.pdf

Smartphone users may also download an app free of charge that offers the same functionality: EskomsePush is one such.

FROM THE MAYOR’S DESK
At an event to acknowledge the vital work done by process controllers, Sedgefield Waste Water Treatment Works was awarded the first runner up position in the category “Best Waste Water Treatment Works (less than 5 Mega-litre/day).”

The event was hosted by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in partnership with the Water Institute of SA. They aim to acknowledge Process Controllers and Municipalities for their work to ensure sustainability, their ability to provide communities with safe drinking water and to protect precious water resources.

Knysna executive deputy mayor, Aubrey Tsengwa, expressed his pleasure with the accolade. “Congratulations to Calvin Jafta (Superintendent) and Calvin Barnard (Foreman) and the rest of the Sedgefield Water & Sewerage team - Knysna Municipality is fortunate to have qualified and dedicated personnel working with us.”

Despite numerous reminders, slow payments on overdue Knysna municipal accounts remain a problem.

Knysna executive deputy mayor, Aubrey Tsengwa, appealed to residents to pay or make arrangements for their overdue municipal accounts. “We urge residents to avoid electricity blackouts or restricted water flow by ensuring that they pay arrear accounts or make the necessary arrangements with our Finance Department.”
“According to item 9.1 of the Approved Municipal Customer Care, Credit Control, Debt Collection, Indigent and Tampering Policy of 2019/2020:

(a) Consumers who are in arrears with their municipal account and who have not made arrangements with the Council will have their supply of electricity and other municipal services suspended, restricted or disconnected;

(b) Council reserves the right to deny or restrict the sale of electricity to consumers who are in arrears with their rates or other Municipal charges.”

He said consumers with outstanding municipal accounts would have their electricity disconnected or water restricted on the 15th of every month. “We shall, without further notice, discontinue the municipal services and begin legal action to recover the debt. The account holder will be liable for all legal, including court costs, and statutory interest,” warned Tsengwa.

Tsengwa asks that residents accept their legal responsibility and pay their overdue municipal accounts immediately. “The municipality and the community it serves are in partnership and working together, we have a much better chance of success.”

Payments can be made at the Knysna Customer Pay Centre (Old Standard Bank Building) and Sedgefield Flamingo Street Offices. Alternatively, you can pay your municipal account at the Post Office, Spar, Pick n Pay, EFT and EasyPay points nationwide.

[The abovementioned policy is available on the Knysna Municipal website: www.knysna.gov.za].

REDEVELOPMENT OF GREY STREET IS ABOUT TO KICK-OFF

The much-anticipated upgrade of Grey Street in Knysna’s central business district is about to begin.

Executive Deputy Mayor, Aubrey Tsengwa, said an amount of R17 million had been allocated for the reconstruction of Grey Street. “This includes the replacement of the old water pipeline, the total rebuilding of the road, parking and beautification. The project is funded from the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) allocation for the 2019/20 financial year.”

Tsengwa said construction work would start during February with expected completion in April 2021. “Work will commence with the installation of an above-ground temporary water pipeline before construction on the road will commence. It will diminish the impact on services to Grey Street property owners and tenants. Phase 2 will be the reconstruction of the road, which will be done in blocks, continuing north until it reaches the Main Road. The first block will be between Waterfront Drive and Gordon Street.”

Construction on Grey Street will be suspended during Easter, the Knysna Oyster Festival and December school holidays. The construction suspension is in keeping with the project ethos, which prioritises the convenience of all stakeholders, minimises traffic congestion and travel delays during roadwork.

A project manager will be onsite throughout the project to ease communication between the contractor, residents and the business owners. “We hope that this will improve communication between all parties and help to facilitate logistics like deliveries, ultimately ensuring a smooth-running project.”

The project is an integral part of Knysna Municipality’s Central Business District Renewal Programme (CBDRP). The goal of the CBDRP at large is to build, restore, renew and enhance the central business district. “I know that work on the project may cause some frustration and inconvenience, but keep in mind that the end product will be an attractive, inclusive space for our residents”, Tsengwa concluded.

The tender to carry out the project has been awarded to experienced joint venture Mapitsi Civil Works and IE Piping. The Project Manager, Mr Aubrey Tlhale, can be reached on 081 785 0526 or aubreytlhale196@gmail.com. Alternatively, enquiries can be directed to the municipality’s Shaun Maree at 044 302 6309 or smaree@knysna.gov.za.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Commemorative Days/Events

3-15 MARCH: KNYSNA TIMBER FESTIVAL

21 MARCH: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

27-29 MARCH: SEDGEFIELD SLOW FESTIVAL

Municipal Meetings 2020

5 MARCH: MAYORAL COMMITTEE

26 MARCH: ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
**WATER RESTRICTIONS**

Level 1 water restrictions now apply, which 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;
  - that residents still obtain permission from the Director: Technical Services before filling swimming pools and undertaking maintenance; and

Please report water leaks and water abuse to 044 302 6331 (o/h) or 060 998 7000.

**CLEAR REFUSE BAGS**

Please note that as from 1 March 2020, clear recycle bags can only be collected from our offices on Mondays and Thursdays during normal business hours.

This will assist our department with better control over the distribution of recycling bags.

We have come to the realisation that many recycling bags are not used for recyclable material but for other refuse such as household and garden items.

Customers will be required to acknowledge receipt of the bags on collection from the Waste office in Clyde Street.

For more information, contact Ramona Loxton on 044 302 6405 or rloxton@knysna.gov.za.

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**SHOWING OFF SOME OF KNYSNA’S TREASURES**

A two-day workshop to promote domestic tourism and empower emerging tour operators took place in February. Petrus van Niekerk, Manager Economic Development at the Knysna Municipality said an educational tour was organised, designed to impart knowledge through experience.

“A collaboration between the Knysna Economic Development Department, the Garden Route District Municipality and the Department of Tourism, almost 45 people attended the workshop where experts in several related fields shared and unpacked their knowledge.”

Day 1 was chaired by the Thulani Sibeko, the Director of the National Department of Tourism. Sibeko highlighted the importance of tourism and said a tourism culture should be cultivated. “Domestic tourism is the backbone of any town’s economy, and it is important to adopt a culture that not only invites visitors but also encourages locals to explore their town.”

On the second day, the group visited the Knysna Heads and learnt that the Knysna Estuary is the second largest in the country. The next stop was Judah Square, the largest Rastafarian community in the country. Brother Zeb, an elder in the community, welcomed the group with a song, ‘one love, one heart’ and the resident tour guide stepped in and took the group through their journey, their struggles and ultimately their triumphs.”

The final stop was MadAboutArt, an NGO in Damse-Bos that exists exclusively for children fighting HIV. Van Niekerk said they guide the children to change their narrative through art and education. “The NGO has the largest HIV/AIDS library and a soup kitchen that is a lifeline to many children frequenting the NGO.”

He thanked everyone for coming and said the workshop would not be possible without partnerships. “A special thanks to Brenton Tours, MadAboutArt, Lithemba Art and Tours, Vuka Ukhanye Tours and Judah Square Rastafari for offering their services free, and Knysna Tourism for all their assistance.”

While the verdict is still out on the origins of how the town was named Knysna the tour guide leading the party relayed a story to depict that it’s, ‘Nice here’ “Knys—na”, get it?