

Municipality to implement further COVID-19 measures

Acting Municipal Manager Dr Michele Gratz said that in the light of the ever increasing number of infections, the municipality has introduced additional measures to promote the concept of Social Distancing.

“The basic definition of social distancing refers to *a deliberate increase in the physical space between people*. To reduce visitors to municipal buildings we ask you to please make use of Council’s e-services. “It is our duty to keep our staff and their working environment safe. Residents are encouraged to set up appointments, phone in queries, correspond via email, send us an sms (we will call back) or send a message via our Mobile App”, she said. “The list of contact details is included at the bottom of this statement.”

Council at its special meeting held on 19 March 2020 resolved to cancel all meetings including all Council and Committee meetings, Budget and IDP consultation meetings and ward report back meetings. All municipal halls, libraries, museums, sports facilities including those used for practise sessions, braai areas and play parks were also closed last week until further notice. Gratz said this includes Steenbok Park, Cathy Park, the Green Hole area and any picnic areas next to the lagoon.

“In addition to this we are also closing all beaches with immediate effect. This includes Noetzie, Coney Glen, Green Hole, Bollard Bay, Brenton-on-Sea, Buffels Bay and all Sedgfield beaches. We will only flatten the infection curve if people adhere to calls to practice social distancing and stay at home.”

Gratz said the wellbeing of residents is their first priority. “The municipality will unblock the water meters of those residents who are in arrears with their payments and no further blocking will take place until the end of April 2020. Please note that residents are still responsible for settling their outstanding accounts. Honour arrangements made to avoid being blocked again. In terms of the Council’s policy, indigent residents receive 6kl free water per month. This scarce resource must be used responsibly and the COVID-19 pandemic should not be used as an excuse to abuse water consumption.”

New security measures for visitors to municipal offices have also been introduced. “Hand-sanitisation stations will be placed throughout the organisation and reception, and security or law enforcement officers will provide hand sanitisation to visitors. No large groups will be allowed entry to the building. Personal and contact details of all visitors entering any municipal building will be recorded. Kindly adhere to the directions given by security personnel or our law enforcement officers.”

She warned entry may be refused should any person choose not to follow the guidelines. “Please note that any person who hinders, interferes with, or obstructs an enforcement officer in the exercise of their duties and powers in terms of the Regulations issued in terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2002, can and will be prosecuted.”

To minimise queues residents are reminded that municipal accounts can be paid at the Post Office, Spar, Pick 'n Pay, EFT and EasyPay points nationwide.

“Please be vigilant and practice social distancing - reduce contact as far as you can. We also appreciate the steps taken by some local business owners to close their businesses for the time being, it could not have been an easy decision to make. I also want to commend local businesses for introducing measures at their premises to prevent infection, like hand sanitizing units as you enter, at pay points and when you leave. Thank you also to those residents and organisations that have started to implement social distancing, together we can make a difference. With infections rising at an alarming rate we need to do everything we can to stop the spread”, Gratz concluded.

According to the latest figures released by the Government last night, South Africa now has 402 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus.

Municipal contact numbers:

- Main Switchboard 044 302 6300
- Emergency Services 044 302 8911

Municipal departments:

- Account Enquiries: 044 302 6558 or 6597 / accounts@knysna.gov.za
- Building Inspectorate: 044 302 6533
- Customer Care: 044 302 6594 / email customercare@knysna.gov.za
- Corporate Services: 044 302 6557
- Electrical Services: 044 302 6397 or 6399
- Human Settlements (Housing): 044 302 6456 or 6377
- SMS: 44453
- Solid Waste Management: 044 302 6405
- Town Planning: 044 302 6318
- Water: 044 302 6311

Important COVID-19 contact details:

For any questions or if you have symptoms that match those of the Corona virus, you can call the following numbers:

- Hotline – 0800 029 999
- Provincial Hotline – 021 928 4102
- WhatsApp: Say “Hi” to 060 012 3456
- COVID-19 website: www.westerncape.gov.za/coronavirus

ENDS

Knysna Municipality Communications Department

P O Box 21, Knysna. 6570. Western Cape. South Africa

Tel +27 (0)44 302 6300 (switchboard) or 302 6430 (direct)

e-mail dnkume@knysna.gov.za / npondoyi@knysna.gov.za