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This issue aims to improve your knowledge of municipal by-laws and policies while also keeping you informed about all municipal activities.

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Swartland Municipality quietly the best once again

On the eve of the municipal elections, without any fanfare, Swartland Municipality was named best local municipality in the Western Cape for the second time.

Western Cape Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Mr Anton Bredell, made the announcement by virtue of his role as reviewer in terms of Section 47 of the Municipal Systems Act. The announcement was published in the Western Cape Provincial Gazette of 8 December.

Swartland Municipality was named best local municipality in the country during 2007/2008 and subsequently won the Vuna Award for Performance Excellence. The current achievement is for the 2008/2009 financial year. Minister Bredell said in the foreword to the publication that the announcement of the results 18 months after the end of the financial year had made his review role rather difficult.

The evaluation methodology is based on the same five key performance areas (KPA's) used for the previous Vuna Awards: municipal transformation and institutional development; basic service delivery; financial sustainability and management; good governance and public participation; and local economic development. The KPA's were assessed out of a maximum of three marks. Swartland's lowest mark (2,1) was for basic service delivery, while the best mark (3 out of 3) was for financial sustainability and management.

The average for the five KPA's was 2,6. Overstrand and Drakenstein were joint second with 2,5.

Mayor Tijmen van Essen is grateful for the excellent results and believes that stability at political and administrative levels is particularly important. Furthermore, it is essential to retain expertise in order to ensure service delivery.

The greatest challenges are to eradicate backlogs in terms of infrastructure, sufficiently to provide for bulk services to ensure economic growth and to keep municipal accounts affordable. With Eskom's cumulative increases over the past year, national salary negotiations and collective agreements, the last-mentioned challenge is certainly not an easy feat.

The full report published in an extraordinary Government Gazette (6817 of 8 December 2010) is available at www.swartland.org.za.

New library brings hope for Chatsworth

Books create opportunities and bring hope. This was the message conveyed by Dr Ivan Meyer, the Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport at the official opening of the new container library in Chatsworth.

The library replaced the wheelie wagon service that was previously run from Chatsworth Primary School. With the library now accessible to the entire Chatsworth community, membership figures during the first month after opening, increased to 204. December circulation stood at 856 books.

[insert photo] At the opening of Chatsworth Library: Dr Ivan Meyer (right) signs a copy of Hansie Cronjé's biography, which he donated to the library. With him is Municipal Manager, Joggie Scholtz.

Database for people with disabilities

[insert disability logo]

Swartland Municipality would like to compile a database of all DPO's (Disabled Persons Organisations) and/or non-governmental organisations (NGO's) (serving the interests of people with disabilities) in its area for future consultation where issues relating to people with disabilities are concerned.

Please forward the name and contact particulars of your organisation to dejonghs@swartland.org.za.

Similarly, all disabled entrepreneurs within the boundaries of the Swartland are requested to forward their contact details, along with particulars of their disabilities and the nature of their business to Sunet de Jongh at the above e-mail address or to the Municipality's postal address.

Editorial

About false commendations and expensive newsletters

It is great to hear that you are working for the best municipality, especially when you read that corruption and poor service delivery have become the norm at most other municipalities in the country.

As regards the credibility of certain other investigations, the results of which are widely published in the media from time to time, one can but wonder, especially when municipalities that are lauded as the best in those, are often also linked to rumours of corruption.

Because the Section 47 review report by the Provincial Government is published 18 months after the financial year-end, the results are not widely broadcast. Nevertheless, we believe the evaluation methodology used is more legitimate and reliable than for most other investigations. Please read the main article relating to this.

The changeover of the newsletter to its new colour format has prompted numerous questions from our clients. Although printing is more expensive, increased printing costs are set off by distributing the newsletter electronically to our clients instead of in printed format.

If your household still receives this newsletter in printed format, please forward your services account number, your cellphone number and your e-mail address to swartlandmun@swartland.org.za in order to receive it electronically.

Until next time!

- The newsletter is distributed to residents of the Swartland municipal area every quarter.

Snippets / Brokkies

*With effect from 1 February 2011 the Building Control Division (Development Services Directorate) at the Municipal Head Office, Malmesbury is open to the public **for the receipt of building plans** during the following hours only:

Mondays to Thursdays	08:00 until 15:30
Fridays	08:00 until 14:30

* Goedgedacht Trust, a registered non-profit and public service organisation, has come up with a product aimed at reducing the use of energy (electricity, gas, paraffin or wood). The so-called *Wonderbag*, an insulated container made from cloth and filled with recycled polystyrene granules, is produced by a group of women from Goedgedacht Trust. Food needs to be cooked on a stove for 10 minutes only, after which it is placed in the *Wonderbag* to cook until it's ready in a few hours' time. Using the *Wonderbag* only three times a week can lead to a saving of up to 13 kWh of electricity and 1,6 L of paraffin.

Each *Wonderbag* costs R150 and is available from Goedgedacht Trust. If you wish to donate a *Wonderbag* to an indigent family, please e-mail Janis Lane of the Trust, at wonderbag.cape@telkomsa.net, or call her on 022 448 1391. A picture and more information are available in Xhosa elsewhere in the newsletter.

*Clients should note that the payment of municipal accounts at the Post Office via the latter's Pay a Bill system, will be terminated on 30 June 2011. The Municipality recently invited tenders for the receipt of payments for municipal accounts on the Municipality's behalf. As the Post Office did not submit a tender, the service had to be discontinued.

* To enable the Municipality's Meter Reading Division to read the water meters of consumers every month, meters must be kept clean and accessible at all times. If access to your premises is problematic (eg. through a locked gate or if you keep dogs on the premises), please forward your cellphone number to Nolene Erasmus at the Meter Reading Division. An SMS services is currently being investigated which will give consumers who have problems with access to their premises advance notice of when meters will be read in their area.

Using a Wonderbag

Saving money, time and electricity

It's a drawstring bag for cooking food slowly, made of material filled with polystyrene balls.

Using a Wonderbag only three times a week will save you:

13 kW electricity a week

1.6 L paraffin

It will also remove 500g of carbon from your carbon footprint annually.

What is particularly amazing about the Wonderbag is how much time it saves women who are working and busy! Cook your food in the morning or at night for ten minutes and put it in the Wonderbag where it is will continue to cook for the whole day. When you come home from work you will have a hot meal waiting for you and your family.

How to use your Wonderbag:

When cooking rice or samp, beans or potatoes, pour enough water into the pot. Boil the starch and cook for 10 minutes. Put the pot in the Wonderbag. When cooking meat, fry an onion until it's brown and after that fry the meat, pour the gravy over and simmer for 10 minutes. Put the pot in the Wonderbag. If you have a big pot you can pour samp and beans that were boiled earlier, or rice or potatoes, into one pot before you put it in Wonderbag. Switch off your stove.

Put a dishtowel at the bottom of the Wonderbag.

Wait for one minute and then place the pot with warm food, with its lid on, on top of the dishtowel in the Wonderbag.

Place the Wonderbag's soft lid on top of the lid of the pot and pull the drawstring tight so that the Wonderbag can cover your pot. Tie the drawstring so that it can surround the bag tightly. Let the food stand on its own in the Wonderbag and it will cook until it's ready.

Time needed to cook food in the Wonderbag:

Meat stew can be cooked for 4–6 hours

Rice and vegies can be cooked for one hour

Samp that has been kept in water and beans can be cooked for 6 hours

Porridge can be cooked for 1–2 hours

Soup can be cooked for 2–3 hours

To buy your own Wonderbag phone Janis Lane at 022 448 1391 or 072 524 8400.

[insert photo Wonderbag]

Recycling gains momentum

We are fortunate in that the 67 igloos positioned at various locations in the Swartland in June last year to promote recycling remain full. In the five months to the end of November 2011, Swartlanders recycled a total of 30 980 kg of paper and/or plastic, and 28 570 kg of glass and/or cans. The total recycled material for November comes to 14 310 kg, almost double the 7 520 kg recycled in July.

Please use the igloos as follows:

The igloo for GLASS is suitable for all types of cans and bottles (with or without stoppers). These need not be washed. However, please do not put window glass in this igloo.

The PAPER igloo is suitable for magazines, newspapers and paper (but preferably not cardboard).

Plastic bottles or containers used for distributing cold drinks, fruit juice and milk may be placed in the PLASTIC igloo.

Quick facts about litterbugs

- Some 45% of all South Africans live in informal settlements where there are no refuse removal services.
- South Africans dump 15 million tons of refuse every year.
- Industries dump 25 million tons of refuse.

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs

Rules for keeping bees

The recent tragic death in Malmesbury of two people after having been attacked by a swarm of bees, sparked many questions from the public.

The keeping of bees in the Swartland municipal area on premises other than premises that are zoned for agricultural purposes, is regulated by a municipal by-law.

The by-law relating to the keeping of bees stipulates that no person may keep bees –

- on premises less than 3 700 m² in extent;
- except in a bar-framed hive approved by the Council, situated not less than 90 m from any street, dwelling, place of business or fowl-house or place where animals or birds are kept, and enclosed by means of a sound wire fence or wall of a height not less than 1,5 m at a distance of not less than 4,5 m in any direction from such hive so as to render such hive inaccessible to animals or unauthorised persons; or
- on any premises upon which any building used for the purpose of any industry, business or trade is situated.

Applications for keeping bees are to be made in writing to the Municipality, which application must –

- (a) specify the premises on which the applicant proposes to keep bees;
- (b) state the maximum number of hives to be used; and
- (c) state whether or not the applicant has a knowledge of the habits of bees and if so, satisfy the Council that in fact he or she has such knowledge.

The municipal Council may withhold its sanction if the relevant premises are within 400 m of the nearest boundary of any church, school, hospital or cinema or any other place of amusement, gathering or recreation. It may also withhold its sanction in the case of the applicant not having any or, in the opinion of the Council, not sufficient knowledge of the habits of bees.

Any sanction of the Council given for the keeping of bees shall expire on 31 December in each year and application for the renewal thereof must reach the Municipal Manager not later than 1 December of such year.

Should you be aware of Swartland residents keeping bees in residential areas that do not comply with the above criteria, please report such cases to the Swartland municipal police for investigation.

Financial assistance available for the indigent

Swartland Municipality's credit control policy stipulates that indigent households qualify for financial assistance if they meet certain conditions.

Conditions

For a household to be granted a so-called compassion subsidy and accordingly be registered as an indigent household, the total gross income of the household, including the income of the rest of the occupants of the premises, may not be more than double the allowance paid by Government to old-age pensioners, plus 10%. Currently the allowance paid to old-age pensioners amounts to R1 080 per month which, according to the Municipality's policy, brings the limit to a gross income of R2 376 per month (that is R1 080 x 2 + 10%) for the total household.

In addition to the above –

- (1) the head of the household and his or her family must personally occupy the premises which the application relates to; and
- (2) the head of the household and/or his or her spouse and/or their legal children who occupy the premises with their parents may not be the legal owner(s) of any other residence.

Application forms and documents

Application forms for this purpose may be collected at any offices of the Municipality. This form, as well as other documentary proof stipulated by the Municipality, must be signed by the head of the household and be certified as true and correct. The head of the household will be deemed the legal owner or legal lessee of the premises or the person who otherwise exercises control over the premises.

The following documents must accompany the application:

- (1) Documentary proof of the gross income of all the persons residing on the premises, for example a letter from an employer which stipulates or certifies the gross salary or wage of that person, a salary slip, a pension card or an unemployment insurance card
- (2) An affidavit by persons residing on the premises who have no income that they are unemployed and do not receive an income of whatever nature
- (3) A certified copy of the applicant's identity document
- (4) The name and identity numbers of all persons 18 years and older who reside on the premises.

The Municipality may, and reserves the right to –

- introduce any steps to verify the correctness of information provided by the applicant, including interviews with and affidavits made by members of the household;
- cease financial assistance if incorrect or false information is provided; and/or
- introduce criminal proceedings against the head of the household or any member of the household who provides false information or fails to inform the Municipality of a change in the financial position of the household.

Enquiries may be directed to Linda du Toit and her credit control team in Malmesbury.