



## Tijmen van Essen elected to lead Swartland

At the first Council meeting after the recent elections, councillor Tijmen van Essen was unanimously elected to replace alderman Anton Bredell, who has been appointed to Provincial Parliament, as Executive Mayor of the Swartland.

Councillor Van Essen is known among his party and **SM** colleagues as someone who can work non-stop with unflinching diligence for hours on end, who takes the trouble to bring himself up to speed with municipal matters so that he can manage them properly and who enacts his views and principles unflinchingly.

It is, in fact, these long hours that sometimes cause him somewhat to neglect his role as family man – which he does see as his top priority. But this father of three daughters and of three (soon to be five!) grandchildren beams as he talks about his work as fulltime councillor and his new task as mayor: “If you do your work with pleasure and enthusiasm, everything automatically falls into place.”

As someone who worked for the municipality himself years back and who has served as councillor over the past nine years or so, his new role as mayor is yet another level that stimulates his interest –

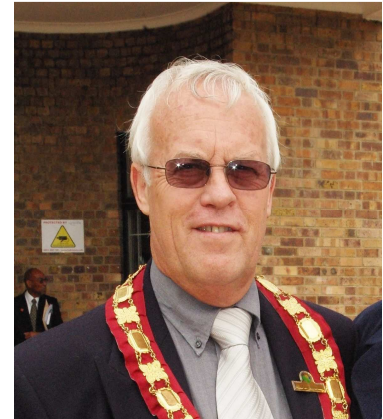
that of local government. As politician, he wants to see the work to be done being carried out in the interests of the community. “To establish best practice and therefore to perform better than other municipalities in certain – if not all! – areas would be a bonus,” he says.

He sees the professional personnel of the **SM** and the good cooperation between them and their councillors as the greatest factor of the success of the **SM**. “The challenge is to get rid of those small gremlins in service delivery and to reach a level where we don’t spend our energy on crisis management but on essential matters like proper future planning.”

He would like to be remembered as someone who led the Municipal Council with vision and insight – like the Council at the turn of the previous century when the Paardeberg dam was built.

To the community, he says: “In everything that we do, you are the most important to us. We will always try – by the grace of God – to deliver to you the best of service.”

(Councillor Van Essen’s full address to the Council after his election is available on the municipal website.)



### Library temporarily closes doors

Malmesbury’s town library closed its doors temporarily on 16 May for about four months for essential maintenance work.

A limited service will be provided during this period from the former girls’ hostel (Huis Basson) behind Swartland Junior School. Only reference works and the library’s pamphlet collection will be housed on the premises to help learners with their school assignments. People who still have library books with them can also hand them in there.

The service is available from 09:00 to 18:00 from Mondays to Thursdays and from 09:00 to 17:30 on Fridays. (Enquiries: Elsabé van der Vver)

## Junior town council rings in third term

At a stylish function held in Malmesbury’s town hall on 14 May, the young leaders who were elected by their schools to the Junior Council of the Swartland in March this year shared the limelight with Western Cape Premier Ms Helen Zille, who addressed those present at this important function as the main speaker.

A symbolic copy of the petition signed by about 3 000 Swartland high-school learners last year as part of the *Mad about Me!* project run by the Junior Council against the abuse, both physical and emotional, of teenagers was formally handed to Ms Zille by the former Junior Mayor of the Swartland, Ms Tienke du Toit.

Ms Zille was also asked, where possible, to publicise the message of the project on behalf of the youth of the Swartland. This message says – in short – that the welfare of the youth is not only in its own hands but also in those of adults. It further says that, to ensure a prosperous community, its youth should be respected in both body and spirit.

At the same function, Ms Devonne Pharaoh of Swartland High School was inaugurated as the new Junior Mayor of the Swartland. Ms Lize Spies, also of Swartland High School, was elected Junior Deputy Mayor. She will take over from Ms Pharaoh as Junior Mayor in March 2010.

This year, the Junior Council wants to focus more intensely on its awareness campaign against the abuse of teenagers. In addition to the *Mad about Me!* project being continued, plans include a number of awareness and outreach actions and a youth symposium that is to be held later this year.

At the same function, a charter was also handed to Mr Anton Bredell – former Executive Mayor – who was honoured in April this year as an alderman. Mr Bredell was appointed the new Provincial Minister of Local Government, Development and Environmental Affairs on 8 May.

## Sterilisation of dogs

The **SM**'s community halls will soon be made available again for the dog clinics of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

Details of the dates and times during which the clinics will be held in the various towns will be announced later by the SPCA itself.

## Election results

Of the 39 508 voters registered in the Swartland, 70% (27 636) presented themselves at the polls during the elections on 22 April.

The voting results of the five parties that obtained the most votes are as follows:

	Provincial	National
<b>ANC</b>	5 906	6 461
<b>ACDP</b>	346	366
<b>COPE</b>	2 121	2 462
<b>DA</b>	17 104	16 542
<b>OD</b>	1 500	1 569

## Civil and Electrical offices to move

The departments of the Director: Civil Engineering Services (At Botha) and Director: Electrical Engineering Services (Roelof du Toit) are moving into new offices from 1 July.

These two directorates will be moving from the Lionel Frank building to the office complex above the Pep Stores building opposite the Sanlam Centre in Malmesbury. Access to the offices will be from Piet Retief Street (opposite Barry's Beef & Barrel).

## Dumping of garden waste prohibited

Residents should take note that anyone dumping garden waste or tree branches in public areas is, if found guilty, punishable with a fine of R1 000 and/or a six-month prison term.

This regulation is enacted by the street ordinance of the **SM**.

## Date of payment for accounts

Please take note that – when the due date for the payment of municipal-service accounts falls on a public holiday, a Sunday or a day on which the municipal offices are closed – such accounts should be paid on the last working day on which the municipal offices are open before the due date of the accounts.

Also read the article on the right about the termination of electricity supply because of late payment.

## Report veld fires here

The management of veld fires is a function of the West Coast District Municipality (WCDM) and not of the **SM**. The **SM**'s fire-brigade service is limited to the town area only.

The WCDM's emergency number where veld fires should be reported is 022 433 8826.

## Late payment of accounts

### Termination of electricity supply: Consumers will have to pay consequences

The **SM** was recently taken on in the media by an extremely irate client who feels that the Municipality is malicious in terminating the electricity supply within two or three days to households that do not pay their services accounts by the due dates.

We've already reacted to this in the media but because we are regularly bombarded with complaints in similar vein by month's end – often in luridly colourful language – we'd like to use this opportunity to place the matter fully in perspective.

Municipal services are those 'things' without which none of us can do, but, unfortunately, that we *have* to pay for. Many people see this as a 'grudge purchase' and leave the payment of their municipal accounts as the very last item on their monthly 'to pay' lists. The tremendous increase in late and non-payments that the **SM** has been experiencing especially over the past few months and the resultant increase in payments overdue by its debtors are irrefutable proof of this.

Over the years, the date of payment for municipal accounts has, on various occasions, been 'moved on' to the extent that between 75 and 90 days currently lapse before consumers pay for the services that they've already (long-forgotten!) used.

The Municipality also – like its clients – has monthly payments to make by specific dates – like those for its Eskom account (for bulk electricity) and for its account of the West Coast District Municipality (for bulk water). The Municipality, however, has to pay these accounts within 14 days after those institutions take their bulk meter readings.

Therefore, to ensure that the **SM**'s cash flow remains healthy so that it can meet its monthly obligations to its creditors and to ensure that services are maintained and upgraded, the Municipality must – of necessity – take rigorous measures to ensure that the money that consumers owe the Municipality is paid by a specific date.

Where action against late and non-payment is concerned, we can state – unequivocally – that EVERYONE in the Swartland is treated equally.

The services account that the Municipality provides states clearly that, if outstanding amounts are not paid by the due dates stated, services will be terminated without further notice. There are specific – and very good – reasons for this lack of further notice, about which we're not going to expand here because some 'chancers' are using methods to bypass the steps taken by the Municipality.

When clients use alternative payment methods – like the Easy pay or ACB systems – they can also clearly see on the back of those accounts what the procedures are that should be followed. Because two to three days lapse before payment is reflected electronically in the **SM**'s bank account, such clients are pertinently requested to fax proof of payment to the Municipality to avoid their electricity supply being terminated or electricity sales being blocked. People who neglect to do this run the risk of their services being terminated and of possibly sitting without electricity over a weekend!

In addition to the internet, there are also 52 pay points throughout the Swartland where consumers can pay their municipal accounts in good time before the end of every month.

People who therefore neglect to pay their accounts by the due dates also have to take pay the consequences of any possible 'losses' that they may suffer if their electricity is terminated.

We trust that this explanation clears the air around this matter.

– Joggie Scholtz, Municipal Manager