

## **Vandalism on the increase**

Public facilities in Swartland Municipality have come under increasing incidents of vandalism over the past few months.

Cemeteries especially are bearing the brunt of this scourge. Fencing and precast wall panels are being removed, gravestones are being broken and flattened, and regular dumping is taking place, all indicating antisocial behaviour beginning to run amok.

“Meaningless damage to any public asset – traffic signs, substations, ablution facilities, public parks, which include cemeteries – is causing great concern: repair work is placing an unnecessary burden on ratepayers, apart from which these funds could have been used to build more facilities instead”, says Joggie Scholtz, Municipal Manager. “Our existing capacity and resources provide for the annual spraying and six-monthly cleaning of cemeteries and we have only a limited budget for the repair of fences, for example. Because cemeteries are public facilities, they have to be accessible to the community, which makes securing them difficult. The cost of providing our 16 municipal cemeteries with full-time personnel and/or security guards is simply not feasible.”

The municipal sportsgrounds are currently closed to the public in accordance with COVID Level 4-measures. “Despite this, however, the fences are still being vandalised, the buildings are still being broken into and plundered and the electrical cables and equipment are still being stolen, as are roofing sheets, presumably to be sold for scrap. Even children’s play parks are being targeted, with the malicious damaging of play equipment, arson, the theft of fences and swing chains, and dumping and other antisocial behaviour. Our budget and even our insurance cannot keep up with the cost of repairing all the damage.”

The Municipality is therefore asking communities to stand together against this criminal behaviour. We are asking members of the public to report such violations and to pass on information to our Law Enforcement Division at 022 487 9411 or to email it to [swartlandmun@swartland.org.za](mailto:swartlandmun@swartland.org.za) with all the relevant details.

Office of the Municipal Manager

Swartland Municipality

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Photo: Some of the gravestones that have been damaged and pushed over.