

Our holiday home-owners and local residential members who do not follow the George Herald will be interested to know that after almost two years, water restrictions were lifted on 9th March by the Department of Water Affairs, although caution is still advised.

The new Budget will kick in on 1st July, when an overall average of 6% in rates, water and services is expected to take effect. We already know about the exorbitant Eskom electricity tariff increase which will take place simultaneously.

Two important dates require your attention, the first being a public meeting at 18h00 this coming Tuesday 12th April at the Touwsrante Community Hall, to discuss the finalization of the Local Structure Plan for the greater Wilderness area. This will be your last opportunity for commentary. The Plan is available for viewing at the Touwsrante Library and on the 5th floor of the Municipal Building in York Street. It is interesting to note that among other issues, the Plan recommends that the informal settlements at Kleinkrantz and Wilderness Heights should not be formalized due to lack of infrastructure.

The other important date is 19h00 on Monday 18th April at the same venue for the presentation of the annual Integrated Development Plan (IDP) which contains the local Budget. Last year saw a good turn-out by members and we encourage you to once more assist this year in showing our strength. Last year's budget (2010/11) shows a mere R53.2M for general maintenance for the entire greater George area, while the Municipal salary bill was 4 times that amount representing 21% of the Operating Budget. Little wonder we have pot-holed streets!

A word of praise, here, for the residents of Kingfisher Close who have taken it upon themselves to clean and tidy up their park. Perhaps residents of other areas can take similar action where warranted. Thanks also to the municipal Parks department for sending along a truck to collect their substantial cuttings.

We have two appeals this month, the first being the control of dogs who constantly bark, particularly at night, which is extremely irritating to neighbours all around the Wilderness suburbs, it seems. We also appeal to all fishermen not to leave line, hooks, sinkers, fish heads and general rubbish on our rocks and beaches. The possibility of banning fishermen/anglers from fishing within 50 meters either side of a demarcated swimming area, especially during holidays, is being investigated; as well as the installation of rubbish bins that are regularly cleaned out, which we hope will also encourage people not to litter.

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On the crime front, our local police admit to being very short staffed as some functions have been centralized in George. Burglaries are again up all over Wilderness. This is attributed to the on-going poor economic climate and lack of crime prevention personnel, plus the realization that we are a prime community for pickings. Please be on the look-out for two alleged crime related vehicles operating in the area – a red Cortina V6 bakkie CX31604 and a white dolphin shaped BMW, both driven by people of colour.

It is with regret that we record the recent death of Tim Lindley, who served on the WRRRA committee for many years during the late 1980's and early 90's. During his term of office he represented WRRRA on the Wilderness Eco Tourism Association Executive Committee, which was also a very active body in those days. We extend our sympathies to his wife Sue, their three

children and families. Tim celebrated his 80th birthday on January 14th and was in good spirits at the time of his death.

With Municipal elections just around the corner, we would like to remind members that you will have three votes. The first is for your Ward Councilor – someone you would trust to do the best he/she can for your area. The second vote is a Proportional Representation Party vote for George Local Council, and finally you will have a Proportional Representation Party vote for the District Council in which you live, being the District of Eden for the Wilderness area. Bear in mind that proportional representation party votes are not Ward specific, and relate only to candidates appearing on a Party Proportional Candidates List. Allocation of Proportional Representative Council seats is strictly sequential in accordance with this Party List, so we suggest you familiarise yourselves with the Proportional Lists to see who you might be voting in by default through use of the proportional vote.

The contenders for Ward 4, which includes Wilderness, are as follows:

D.A. Leon van Wyk from Wilderness

ANC Jonathan Vaas from Touwsrante

Independent: Fazil Mohamed from Kleinkrantz, previously Mayor of Wilderness Council

We have also learned, today, that Victoria Bay and Victoria Heights have been taken out of our Ward by the Demarcation Board, and that they have now been included in Ward 11 which forms part of Thembaletu.

We end with the good news that Wilderness Village is now a Wireless Hot Spot – more about this in our next newsletter.

Much to ponder ahead of our next newsletter, but we wish our Christian members a blessed Easter and a happy Pesach to our Jewish friends. May our travelling members drive and arrive safely.