

Third Quarter 2019 Update

Despite an apparent lull there has been much going on—with some frustrations - behind the scenes! The Exco have been hard at work to ensure that the best interests of the members have been kept at the forefront. As you know the main aspects of our mandate are to liaise with the municipality for efficient service delivery as well as to facilitate meetings where members can network.

A meeting was requested with the Municipal Managers office in **early August** with an agenda around 3 core issues: utilisation of the drought grant and additional boreholes, waste management and privatisation thereof and plans to reduce municipal headcount.

A summary of this meeting is provided below.

Drought funding of R32m: This was granted in March 2019 with conditions attached. It was granted on the basis of a geological study done. The fund had to be spent according to this study. According to Govt policy money has to be spent within the year and tenders needed to be awarded. Since there was only 2 months until year end there is a default **roll-over** procedure to be followed with **possible approval** only likely in **November**. To meet conditions the municipality has awarded contractors contracts but they cannot start until money is approved in the roll-over process. On encouragement from the MM Office and team **the Business Chamber wrote a letter to Department of Water and Sanitation to support speeding up rollover of funds.**

Boreholes and Gift of the Givers (GoG): Dr. Gideon Groenewald had indicated the existence of boreholes in Sanparks. According to him four of these would meet half of the town's water requirement. Three of these could be refurbished easily at a cost of R9m. The Exco were advised that since the geological study wasn't based on Gideon's work, the drought relief monies cannot be used on GoG. Ivor indicated that within 4 months time they would be able to connect the additional boreholes into the system. Capacity has not yet been tested. He hoped that within 6-8 weeks additional water will start flowing in.

Challenges: vandalism, boreholes are far apart, shortage of electrical cables, shortage of government vehicles, despite drought tariffs some consumers use is still excessive.

Waste Management: The municipality would be happy to look at proposals regarding privatisation of the transfer facility. Privatisation could be implemented and addressed in the new year after the staffing placement process which is underway.

Municipal Organigram: We were advised that a placement process was happening in all the different towns of the municipality. We were advised of a strategic planning session that would take place at the end of September at which stage head count reductions would be revealed.

At the end of the meeting the Exco was informed that the MM Office would not meet with the Business Chamber again directly but via the Forum which we were understood to mean the newly established Graaff Reinet Economic Forum (GREF). However, it would appear the Forum appears to be part of a greater Forum as indicated by BNLM communications thereafter.

(Please note that the scheduling of the above meeting was not without its challenges given rescheduling of the meeting 4 times!)

Network Meeting 6 September 2019

Update regarding Graaff Reinet Economic Forum

Derek Light spoke to a good turnout of members at Karoo Park Guest House and included the following points:

- * The vision of the Graaff Reinet Economic Forum (GREF) is that it is an A-political body and a mouthpiece of the community and a means for all residents to lobby and work together with the Municipality.
- * Members of existing civic organisations will be represented. These bodies will still carry on their work as before.
- * Derek highlighted the fact - noted in the press- that the majority of municipalities are dysfunctional. This extends also to the Beyers Naude Local Municipality (BNLM) where a lot of the problems are inherited due to the amalgamation.
- * Despite challenges the local economy is thriving and the property market is buoyant.
- * What precipitated the formation of GREF were signs that the Municipality was failing in some key service areas—electricity supply, waste management and sewage. Before GREF got going an electricity supply crisis had to be averted. The Municipality had to agree to terms regarding the payment of Eskom and the crisis was averted. Next up was the development of a Waste Management Program in order to resolve a waste crisis. Meanwhile the water situation was tenuous and the sewage line fails continuously. Legal action against the Municipality was considered. Rather than take this course of action which could lead to litigation and the collapse of the municipality it was felt that lending a helping hand is a better way to resolve the situation in the spirit of Ubuntu.
- * By harnessing resources more effectively the GREF is in a better position to lobby the municipality. The intention is to stabilise service delivery, secure what we have, promote our town and attract investment.
- * He noted that it was critical that more people join up with the Graaff Reinet Chamber of Commerce or one of the other civic organisations in order to for us to get listened to.

Dr Dennis Farrell George Business Chamber Chair was a guest invited by the GRCOC to offer input. The George Chamber have a good model of working together with the municipality. Members may recall Dr Farrell's address at last year's Xmas function.

Next event Info....

Are you interested in PRIVATE ELECTRICITY PROVISION? Come along to a presentation by a representative of PowerX, the first licensed private sector electricity trader in South Africa. Please note that its CEO Them bani Bukula is a previous director of NERSA.

In collaboration with the Giant Flag!

Wednesday the 23rd, KarooPark 17h30!!

SanParks Update

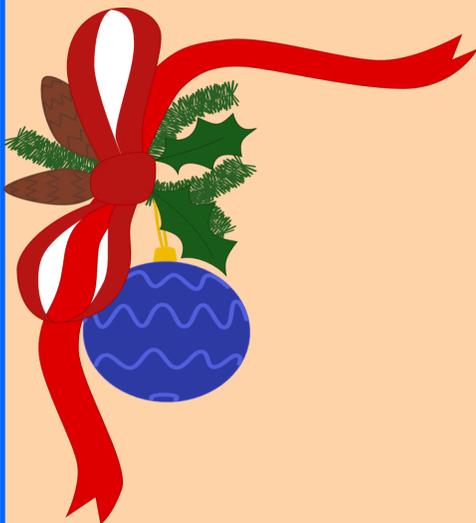
According to Buks Marais all animals have been provided with access to water via windmills and dams working together with solar pumps. All windmills have been fixed including now the windmill at Lootsfontein on the Eastern side. The solar pumps are working well. In total there are three windmills and two solar pumps. Most of the dams are three-quarters full.

Work on the new path at the Valley of Desolation has not yet begun. Funds are being provided by the Honorary Rangers and this will be finalised in the next 2 weeks.

Preparation work has begun for the Roof de Karoo which takes place 2-5 April 2020 and bookings are now open.

End of Year Christmas Dinner, 25 Nov 2019, Coldstream, 6 for 6.30 pm, R175 for a selection of main and dessert, Its been a tough year but we have got to this point so lets celebrate with some good company, an inspiring talk and great food! RSVP to Kim by 15 November !!

Our Guest Speaker: **local geohydrologist Neville Paxton of GEOSS**, As mentioned by Derek in the GREF Circular No 1 sent out last week, the GREF is going to establish a water supply sub-committee which will include Neville Paxton, Johan Bouwer and Derek Light. This committee will investigate long-term solutions to the water supply crisis. Neville has agreed to speak to us!



NEVILLE PAXTON (MSc) - GEOHYDROLOGIST

Neville completed an Environmental and Engineering Geology honours degree at the University of Pretoria, followed by a MSc Geohydrology at the University of the Free State. He is currently involved with the full spectrum of groundwater development, from exploration phase to wellfield management. He is also part of the Contamination and Groundwater Impact Assessment Unit for GEOSS and heads up the Eastern Cape branch in Graaff-Reinet. Neville has a passion for the agricultural sector and enjoys working in the field. (GEOSS Website)