

APRIL 2022

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Bulletin

#overstrand4all

Official newsletter of the Overstrand Municipality

#C4ourself

WHAT COUNCIL ACCOMPLISHED IN ITS FIRST 100 DAYS



OVERSTRAND'S MAYCO: Cllr Arnie Africa (Management Services), Ald Elnora Gillion (Local Economic Development), Cllr Clinton Lerm (Investment and Infrastructure), Executive Mayor Annelie Rabie (Finance and Tourism), Cllr Lindile Ntsabo (Protection Services and Crime Prevention) and Cllr Ronald Nutt (Community Services)

Following on the 2021 local government elections, Overstrand's new Council was inaugurated on 17 November where after Executive Mayor, Dr Annelie Rabie, appointed her Mayoral Committee (Mayco) on 25 November and confirmed by the end of the same month that all ward committees in the Overstrand have been duly elected and appointed.

Looking back on her team's first 100 days in office, Rabie acknowledged that the road ahead will not be easy, but that she is satisfied with the groundwork that has been laid to cause some "tectonic shifts towards creating an Overstrand for all".

The Mayco is comprised of six portfolios each chaired by a Councillor: Finance and Tourism (Cllr Rabie), Protection Services and Crime Prevention (Cllr Ntsabo), Management Services (Cllr Africa), Local Economic Development (Ald. Gillion), Infrastructure and Investment (Cllr Lerm), and Community Services (Cllr Nutt).

"For obvious reasons, the responsibility or concern of these portfolios overlap and, for that reason, the outcome of the 100-day plan should be viewed holistically rather than be judged on the accomplishments of a single portfolio," Rabie said.

"Nevertheless, what we have learnt in our first 100 days in office is that far too many entities have a supposed say in how Overstrand should go about conducting its business, resulting in a lot of red tape and some rather protracted engagements that, seemingly, never arrive at a conclusion.

"We also found that Overstrand is party to several Memoranda of Understanding that obligate the municipality to foot the bill for unfunded mandates: Having to keep baboons in check and keeping traffic lights along a provincial road working are but two examples. These obligations cost us several millions every year, money that could have been spent elsewhere to address the immediate needs of our communities.

"Most disconcerting was that we uncovered a great deal of frustration among our citizenry mostly because some of them have been waiting for a simple answer to a simple question – such as how to settle a bill or how to finalise the registration of a property – that does not seem to be forthcoming due to officials who opted to shun rather than serve.

"Back in 1836 Charles Darwin, then aged 24, remarked: If the misery of our poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin."

I am most grateful that I have found a partner in Dean O'Neill, our municipal manager, who fully agrees with me that we should do our best not to sin."

From the word go, Dean has been more than willing to walk this path of discovery with me every step of the way."

"Given his commitment, I have every reason to believe that, in unison, Overstrand's Council and its administration can turn a page: #Overstrand4all"

For a detailed version of the Mayor's address to Council on her first 100 days in office, visit <https://www.overstrand.gov.za/en/media-section/news/853-mayor-rabie-s-speech-on-her-first-100-days-in-office>

SANDF STEPS IN TO HELP COMBAT POACHING

Antisocial behaviour associated with the illegal harvesting of marine resources along Overstrand's coastline has posed a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of residents for many years.

In an attempt to rid itself of this scourge, Overstrand Municipality has decided upon calling in the SANDF so that an end can be made to the unabated plundering of natural resources and the resultant devastating effects poaching has on the public in general.

On welcoming the SANDF contingent to Overstrand, Mayor Rabie acknowledged that the municipality simply does not have enough resources to follow up on or to prosecute cases against alleged poachers.

"We do hope that the presence of the SANDF will discourage perpetrators and will help us to ban these criminals from our shores once and for all," the Mayor said.



Lt Col Adriaan Lotriet, SANDF staff officer for operations, received a warm welcome from Director Neville Michaels, Mayor Annelie Rabie and Deputy Mayor Lindile Ntsabo

RABIE TAKES A FIRM STAND ON SCHULPHOEK HOUSING PROJECT

During a Council meeting held on Monday, 21 February 2022, Executive Mayor Annelie Rabie voiced her concerns about, what she termed, "fake news" doing the rounds with regards to the Schulphoeke Housing Project.

To help allay public discontent and fears regarding this project, she formally requested the Speaker to ensure that this matter "be a standing item on every council agenda going forward".

Details of what the Mayor had to say on this matter can be viewed at <https://www.overstrand.gov.za/en/media-section/news/848-schulphoeke-housing-project>. Alternatively, contact your nearest municipal office to request a printed version of the Mayor's address.

HERMANUS FACILITY RECYCLING ± 70 TONS OF WASTE PER MONTH ALREADY



The Waste Material Recovery Facility situated in Schulphoek Road, next to the water treatment works and Zwelihle Primary in Hermanus

The Waste Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Hermanus has been fully operational since November 2021. Operated by the contractor Hermanus Recycling, this facility groups, sorts and bales everyday recyclable household waste such as glass and plastic bottles, milk cartons, tin cans, paper and cardboard originating from the Greater Hermanus and Hangklip-Kleinmond areas.

Overstrand's Solid Waste Manager, Craig Mitchell, is delighted to report that thanks to the excellent cooperation of residents, roughly 70 tons of waste is already being redirected from the Karwyderskraal landfill site monthly, which will go a long way towards extending that site's lifecycle.

He urged residents who are not already doing so to make use of the clear recycle bags provided free of charge by the municipality to dispose of their household's recyclable waste. "Helping to keep the waste stream that ends up at landfill sites to a minimum by disposing of your recyclables responsibly will definitely benefit our environment now and in the future," he said.

Getting to grips with recycling

Since November last year, the municipality has been providing households with clear plastic bags which they can use to dispose of their recyclables. These bags should be placed out on the same day ordinarily scheduled for waste collection in your area.

For every clear plastic bag collected on that day, a replacement one will be provided free of charge.

■ Do's and Don'ts

Recycling is rather simple, as long as you follow these golden rules:

- ✓ "Wet waste", in other words things that cannot be recycled, goes into the black bag and recyclables into the clear bag: Thus, only place clean and dry recyclable items such as plastic or glass bottles, tin cans, milk cartons and items made from paper or cardboard in the clear bag.
- ✓ To prevent injury to refuse collectors, please be sure to wrap shards of broken glass in newspaper before disposing thereof.
- ✓ Note that garden waste (cuttings, debris, et cetera) should be placed in a separate green bag so that it, too, can be redirected for composting.
- ✓ Don't forget that refuse bags – whether black, clear or green – should only be placed out on the day scheduled for collection: They should not be placed out ahead of time. In fact, to leave refuse bags on the sidewalk overnight is regarded as a criminal offence in those areas affected by problem animals.

■ No clear bag or needing more?

Due to demand and the resultant pressure on available stock, some households may not always receive a replacement clear bag on collection day. There are also instances where households may require more clear bags to cope with volumes.

In instances such as these, replacement bags can be collected from the Hermanus (Magnolia Street) and Hangklip-Kleinmond (5th Avenue) administrations' help desks.

Note, too, that large volumes of recyclables can be dropped off at the Hermanus MRF between 08:00 and 17:00 from Monday to Friday and until 14:00 on public holidays that fall on a weekday.

Should you need to dispose of excess recyclables over a weekend, please make use of the nearest transfer station or municipal drop-off facility.

"Wetland Action for People and Nature"

- unique peatland in Overstrand a prime example



Pictured at the Onrus River Palmiet Peatlands are from l-r: Duncan Clews (Camphill Farm Community), Sheraine van Wyk (Whale Coast Conservation), Dr Lesley Gibson (ARC specialist researcher), Byron Sharpe (Camphill Farm Community), Simon Schoenberger (Camphill Farm Community), Cllr Clinton Lerm (Mayco member: Investment and Infrastructure), Stephen Müller (Director: Infrastructure & Planning), Liezl de Villiers (Senior Environmental Manager), Meagan Carelse (Fire Department), Tarron Dry (Environmental Services Department), Kim Heneke (Fire Department), Jill Hendricks (Environmental Services Department), Danielle Smith (Environmental Services Department) and Lester Smith (Fire Chief). In front are Dr Alanna Rebelo (ARC wetland ecologist) and Yulanda Scholtz (Fire Department).

WORLD WETLANDS DAY IS CELEBRATED IN FEBRUARY EACH YEAR. In recognition of the essential role these natural filtering systems play in keeping the vulnerable ecosystems of our estuaries functioning, it was decided to revisit the Onrus River peatland in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley two years after it has finally been declared safe following on an underground fire that raged and smouldered for months and months on end.

The Onrus River peatland, commonly referred to as the Palmiet Peatlands, is the only upstream natural filtering system that keeps the Onrus estuary in balance. This peatland is unique since it is covered by a robust endemic shrub *Prionium serratum* (palmiet) that slows down water flow and forms peat.

Peat is organic material with a high carbon content that accumulates over thousands of years.

Covering approximately 33 ha, the Palmiet Peatlands piqued the interest of scientists the world over when a runaway brushfire set the peat alight, causing a subsurface fire that took almost a year to contain and posed a serious health threat to anyone in close proximity.

"We had to bring in a peat specialist, Dr Piet-Louis Grundling from the National Working for Wetlands Programme, which is an initiative of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), and a fire specialist, Martin Bolton from the National Working on Fire Programme, to assist and to find a workable way forward to douse the underground fire. In partnership with these specialists and other government organisations and affected landowners, a specialised fire suppression plan was implemented. The Overstrand Environmental Management Department played a huge role in the coordination of these efforts and received a National Wetlands award for their efforts," said Liezl de Villiers, Overstrand's Senior Environmental Manager.

Funded by the Water Research Commission, a project titled Determine peat loss and develop management and rehabilitation protocols for peatlands in South Africa has been initiated by the Agricultural Research Council: Natural Resources and Engineering (ARC-NRE) under guidance of Dr Althea Grundling.

Vitaly important data will be collected over a period of at least two years and, thus far, the research team has dug more than 20 wells and fitted these with piezometers along three transects at the peatland to monitor water levels. The aim with this field exercise is to establish hydrological and stratigraphical baseline data before and after rehabilitation.

"Peat can only burn if it is no longer saturated, so the question is: What causes the peatland to dry out? If you think about it logically, it is because less water comes into the system," Dr Lesley Gibson, specialist researcher at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), explained.

Invasive alien plant species might be a cause, or it could be attributed to the building of the De Bos Dam in the late 70s to supply Hermanus with drinking water as well as the expansion of agricultural activities upstream from this dam.

"Once we have collected and analysed the data, we will have a better understanding of how the system functions. Only then can we decide on how best to rehabilitate and manage it," Dr Gibson said.

The research team is confident that the first data might be available as early as October this year.



*Installing a deep piezometer
(Photo: AT Grundling)*



*Inspecting a site to install a piezometer nest
along a transect at the Onrus River Palmiet
Peatland (Photo: AT Grundling)*