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A message from the Executive Mayor – Dr Ruben Richards

NEWSLETTER and INFORMATION NOTE
WITH PHOTOS
To all residents of Cederberg

For immediate release (12 June 2023)

WATER WATER EVERYWHERE . . .

Jamborees, flooding rivers, rock falls, potholes and broken garbage trucks

Dear Residents of the Cederberg

Winter is upon us and the first heavy rains have caught us by surprise, unfortunately. We must admit that we were not ready for the forces of mother nature which have shown its power over the past few days. From falling rocks down mountains to potholes appearing all over like unwanted blisters and pimples on one's face; from blocked drains to unblocked raging rivers bursting its banks and threatening to cause a near drowning of a bakkie full of residents in a picturesque setting of Nuweplaas, one of Wupperthal's "buitestasies". Even Operation Skoon Dorpe and its over 200 EPWP workers (i.e. Waste Pickers) had to take cover and wait till the rain subsided before they could continue to clean our towns. WOW! Winter is here.

In the midst of the rainy weather the new Municipal Manager, Gerrit Matthyse, has taken the administration into the community via what he calls a Jamboree program. For the past few Saturdays the entire administration moved their office desks into the community in order to bring services closer to the people. Well done MM and administration.



Our Mayor, has also been very active since tabling his people-friendly budget on 31 May. The past few days and weeks has seen him visiting disaster sites caused by the heavy rains, speaking to primary school children as part of child protection week, motivating EPWP workers (i.e. waste pickers) who are cleaning up our towns, and addressing community gatherings about the positive changes taking place in the municipality under the leadership of the new Municipal Manager, Gerrit Matthyse. We are excited that within the next few days, the MM will be joined by the newly appointed Chief Financial Officer, Nico Smit of Clanwilliam. Under the leadership of these two senior and competent leaders our municipality is well positioned for a turnaround. The Director of Support Services will shortly be appointed as well. We can now expect rapid stabilisation within the administration.



Of course, our optimism is tempered by the reality that we have limited funds, and broken garbage trucks that spend more time in the garage than collecting garbage. We do apologise for not being able to collect your garbage on time. Please bear with us. We will get better. Promise.

In addition, our towns have a legacy of poorly maintained infrastructure. We have pipes bursting under the slightest pressure and potholes appearing like unwanted cancerous growths. We have non-compliant waste management (i.e. dump) sites and raw sewerage threatening our drinking water sources. Our technical staff are over-stretched not only by the normal challenges, but also those created through loadshedding – which irritates and frustrates us all.

Nevertheless, we remain positive and determined to give you, our client, the best possible service under difficult circumstances.

The good news, or light at the end of this tunnel, is that our new budget cycle starts on 1 July. We have proactively budgeted for maintenance, a new garbage truck, tractors and trailers – in short, a new era of service delivery. Of course, and to a large extent, it all depends on how faithfully our residents continue to pay their municipal bills and how we ensure no wastage of your precious money. From our side we will also try to ensure that your bills are as accurate as possible. Thank you to those of you who pay us on time. We really appreciate it.



No doubt, our budget is very tight and I can assure you that we are doing everything we can to raise grant funding for our projects. With our new CFO, Nico Smit, as part of our team, I am confident that we shall see a financial turnaround very soon.

In conclusion, I remind you again that our winter season has just started. More rains are coming. No doubt, our dam needs the water. I do hope that we will be able to harvest all the rain water we receive, otherwise we will end up like the sailor in the poem “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who famously said: “*Water, water everywhere, not a single drop to spare.*” The Coleridge poem is about a sailor who is surrounded by saltwater but cannot drink it because it is undrinkable. In other words, he was saying that despite being surrounded by something, you sometimes cannot benefit from it. Our hope is that we will benefit from all the water, which will fall from the heavens. May it be a blessing and not a curse. May the water bring only relief and no devastation.

I invite you to keep dry, warm and positive as we navigate our way through the coming winter.

Blessings

Executive Mayor
Dr Ruben Richards

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***Mayor interacts with learners at Engelbrecht NGK Primary School in Elands Bay –
Commemorating Child Protection Week.***







Mayor visits Nuweplaas, the place where residents were stranded as the river washed away their bakkie.

Nuweplaas is located 15 kilometers beyond Wupperthal, travelling eastwards.

Passengers of bakkie stranded. A tractor rescued them from the middle of a raging river.



Picturesque Nuweplaas river flooding causing a bakkie (in the middle of the picture) to stall.



***Executive Mayor, Dr Ruben Richards visits the flooding river.
See position of the bakkie next to head of Mayor in the picture.***



Thanks to Krisjan Mouton and Olyfenboschkraal agricultural association for this timeous alert. The gravel road between Bulshoekdam and Klawer is currently closed due to rockfalls. Please use the N7 until further notice.



Thanks to Tobie Tieties for reporting this broken drain – Aquamarine Road, in Clanwilliam.



Thanks to Janneman Nieuwoudt for alerting us to these potholes. Nieuwoudtstr Citrusdal.



***Thanks to Cllr Venter for reporting these potholes
in Lamberts Bay***



***Mayor visits EPWP workers
- Citrusdal***



Mayor visits EPWP workers in Lamberts Bay



Mayor visits EPWP workers in Elands Bay and provides them with Vitamin C - oranges



Jamboree engagements – Citrusdal

***Anthony Mlata (left) introduces the Municipal Manager, Gerrit Matthyse (right)
to the residents of Citrusdal***



ends