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Hdorp Vehicle Roadworthy Testing Centre has re-opened

Kouga Municipality has finally re-opened its A-grade testing centre in Humansdorp following its closure two years ago after flash flood. Motorists have since 2015 not been able to take their vehicles there and had to use a private testing centres which often cost more. This has been inconvenient for residents and businesses.

Although insurance did pay out for repairs for the centre, there were administrative

problems, which have now been sorted out. Bookings for the municipality's vehicle testing centre can be made and paid for at the Kouga Traffic Department in Hout Street, Humansdorp.

As an A-grade facility, the centre can test vehicles and trailers of all makes and sizes. Tests take between 20 and 40 minutes, depending on the vehicle.

Public meetings on how much new rates will be

Four public meetings have been arranged this month to explain Kouga's new General Valuation Roll to property owners.

The new roll will determine how much property owners will have to pay for rates and taxes from the 2018/2019 financial year. The roll will be finalised and advertised for objections by 31 January 2018.

All the meetings will start at 6:30 pm and will be held on the following venues. Property owners can attend the meetings nearest to where their properties are. Public meetings to inform you

about how much rates you will pay

- * 12 June at the Newton Hall in Jeffreys Bay
- * 13 June at the Hankey Learners Licence Test Centre at the main municipal office
- * 14 June at the Humansdorp Community Club
- * 15 June at the St Francis Links

For more info: contact Marinda van der Merwe 042 200 2157 or valuations@kouga.gov.za; Regardt van Vuuren 042 200 2157 or valuations2@kouga.gov.za; Wendy Jankens 042 200 8543 or valuations3@kouga.gov.za

Kouga Municipal News

New municipal budget approved unanimously

Kouga Council unanimously approved the new budget by the Council at the end of May. The municipality's new five-year Integrated Development Plan (IDP) was also approved unanimously at the same meeting.

In terms of the approved budget the total operating revenue for 2017/2018 is R684,339 million, which represents an increase of 7.03 % when compared to the 2016/17 adjustments budget.

Funding for the budget will be obtained from various sources but primarily from service charges such as electricity, water, sanitation, the Environmental Management Fee (EMF) and refuse collection (\$4.08 %), property rates (23.46 %), grants and subsidies from national and provincial government (16.69%).

The following tariff increases were approved:

- Property rates 8%
- Water 9.5%
- Sanitation 9%
- Refuse 9%
- Electricity (average increase in income) 2.05%
- EMF 6%

The total operating expenditure has increased by R49,302 million from R695,540 million in 2016/17 to R744,842 million in 2017/18. This represents a 7.09% increase. The capital budget is R59,68 million, which is R8.7 million or 12.73 % less than the 2016/17 adjustments budget. It will be funded from government grants and subsidies, as well as from internal funding.

An amount of R42-million, which equates to 5.85% of the total operating budget, has been allocated for repairs and maintenance for the municipality's "dilapidated" electrical infrastructure, water and sanitation, roads and storm water drainage. An additional R2-million of the EMF has further been earmarked for maintenance and upgrades to beachfront areas.

A total of R 8.8 million has been approved for the purchase of new vehicles. The mayor said while the repairs and maintenance budget was below Council's target of 8%, it was

decided that it made more financial sense to replace vehicles that are no longer functional instead of spending enormous amounts on trying to repair them.

She said Council was also of the view that service delivery was being hampered by the program, with staff costs representing 34.37% of the total operating expenditure. "Aligning the program to the needs of the institution will be a key focus area of our new municipal manager, whose appointment is currently being finalised," the Mayor said.

"The new staff budget of R 256,022 million will cater for an organization designed to take the institution forward. A work place study and skills audit will also form part of this process."

She said the biggest capital project on the new budget was the multi-year upgrade of the Knutsfontein Waste Water Treatment Plant at Humansdorp, where R15,225 million will be spent in the new financial year. "The upgrade is necessary to cater for the housing project that is in an advanced stage of planning for the area," she said.

She said Council would also be addressing the underspending of the capital budget by certain directorates. "The Budget Monitoring and Evaluation Committee will be meeting monthly in the 2017/18 financial year to ensure we do not face a similar problem in the future."

The Mayor Elza van Lingen said in a first for Kouga, certain tariffs would be decreased in the new financial year in line with community inputs.

Previously disadvantaged communities have asked for reductions in the cost to hire halls and sports facilities, as well as cemetery and burial-related tariffs. Consequently the municipality has, reduced these tariffs by 20% in line with a commitment to compile a pro-poor budget," van Lingen said.

The new budget and IDP will be available for perusal on the municipal website at www.kouga.gov.za, as well as at municipal offices and libraries

Data Collectors - these men legally allowed to knock at your door

These official Kouga municipal valuers will be collecting preparatory data in Kouga towns from 24 May to mid-June 2017.

The data collection aims to lay the groundwork for the compilation of the new General Valuation Roll for 2018 - 2023. The pair of data collectors will be taking photographs of properties.

"They might also have to enter some houses," the mayor, Elza van Lingen said, "We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause, however, these preparations are important if we are to compile a credible valuation roll."

She said DOP Valuers had been awarded the tender to compile the new roll. The data collectors are Tjart Visser and Bernard de Klerk.

The data collectors will be wearing identity tags in the interest of security. However, if residents at home are uncertain about the data collectors at their door, they can call the Valuations Department at 042 200 8543 or 042 200 2157 to verify their identities before allowing them access to their properties.

The draft valuation roll will be tabled to Council by the end of January 2018. Property owners will then be informed of the new valuation of their property and will have the opportunity to object should they believe the

valuation is incorrect.

The new valuations will determine how much property owners pay for rates from July 2018. Properties will be valued according to their market value as at 1 July 2017.

A series of public meetings will also be held in July to introduce the valuers and valuation process to property owners. The public meetings will start at 6:30 pm as follows:

- * 12 June meeting at Newton Hall for Jeffreys Bay and surroundings.
- * 13 June meeting at Hankey Learners Licence Test Centre for Hankey and surrounding towns
- * 14 June meeting at Humansdorp Country Club for Humansdorp and surroundings.
- * 15 June, at the St Francis Links for St Francis residents, including those from Sea Vista and Oyster Bay.

The new General Valuation Roll will determine how much property owners will be expected to pay for rates and taxes from the 2018/2019 financial year.

Further info contact Marinda van der Merwe on 042 200 2157 or valuations@kouga.gov.za; Regardt van Vuuren on 042 200 2157 or valuations2@kouga.gov.za; Wendy Jankens on 042 200 8543 or valuations3@kouga.gov.za

