



5 March 2021

Dear GKBC Members, business owners and fellow Knysna Residents

**Great news!**

The new Board decided that for this Chamber to succeed it needs to employ a focussed individual to drive the office, liaise with Government and Municipal structures and maintain close communications with our ever-increasing number of members. I am positively overwhelmed by the willingness of very good and qualified people to give up their time on civic affairs in order to promote the town, its businesses and generally identify ways of stimulating our local economy. I thank them for their enthusiasm.

We have appointed Ypie Kingma as our Office Administrator. Her experience and connections in town will help drive the vision of the Chamber. Welcome Ypie and thank you for the commitment you have already shown.

**Happy New (Financial) Year!**

At the start of a new financial year, I want to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the 2022 financial year! I think most of us are so relieved that the 2021 financial year is now behind us and want to look forward to a better financial year. I think in light of the pandemic still being around we must remain vigilant, but we must also be positive and continue doing business using these times to be creative and think of new ideas. May this financial year be a prosperous year for not only your business but also our town in general!

**New Membership fee structure**

It is also time for our annual membership renewals. We have revisited the membership fee structure and have come up with a tiered structure in order to make it more affordable for smaller businesses to join, as we value each and every business and need even the smallest business to be part of the Chamber. New and existing members must please complete our new application form which contains valuable information we need for statistical purposes.

**So why should you join the chamber?**

As a Business Chamber our aim is to be the Government liaison body by building relationships with the municipality and other governing bodies, and thereby build effective lines of communication with them. As a town we need to stand together and help where we can in order to make the town not only an attractive holiday destination but also an attractive business investment hub which will stimulate the local economy and job creation.

But for us to be able to make that difference and be taken seriously we need numbers behind us and therefore we need you to join and become part of the Chamber which can make a difference. We have great board members with a vast range of skills so all we need is the backing of business and individuals in Knysna and the surrounding area.

**DIRECTORS:**

Pierre Gouws (Chairman), Richard Sohn (Vice Chairman), Andries Fourie, Chris Schutte, Cliff Elion, Elmay Bouwer, Evelyn Pepler, Hermann Kapp, Jason White, Martin Hansson, Mark Sofianos  
Southern Right Financial Solutions (Company Secretary)

**Our three main focus areas for the year are:**

1 – **Knysna Estuary** – As this is such an important attraction in our town, we need to understand the responsibilities of governance, cleanliness, access control and in general the state of the estuary. We have already engaged with SANPARKS and will be working closely with them to establish a better relationship with them for mutual benefit and support.

2 - **Socio-economic study** – we would like to get an understanding of the general state of businesses in our town and the economy of our town in general, to understand for example the impact COVID had on the town and its businesses.

3 – **Safety and Security** – we feel it is not only very important for our citizens and business owners to feel safe and be proud of our town, but even more so we have to market the perception that it is a safe town for tourists to come and enjoy, without having to look over their shoulders when walking around at night etc. We would therefore like to address certain issues and support initiatives that can contribute to improved security, cleanliness, aesthetics and well-being of the town.

**Networking Events**

We have also decided that a key ingredient to any business success is networking, and building business connections. Therefore, we will be supporting various networking initiatives and also host some events this year. We urge you to get involved. These events are not only great to get out and meet people but important business connections which can be built over time. Please look out for the marketing campaigns.

And in closing, may this year be the beginning of a great new era, may our town prosper and in achieving that we need to remember to support local!

**Pierre Gouws**

**Chairman**

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