

## Minutes of the annual general meeting of the Greater Knysna Business Chamber

Held on 16 February, 2023

At the Graywood Hotel, Knysna

Present: 76 members and guests

### 1.0 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Last year's minutes were proposed by Richard Sohn and seconded by Esme Jeffereys

### 2.0 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Good afternoon, everyone and a hearty welcome to our AGM from my side.

The Greater Knysna Business Chamber has now been in existence for about 3 and a half years so it is just about through the infancy stage. At times it was tough to keep going but we are still here and still believe we have a role to play in this beautiful town of ours.

Reflecting on the past year we were kept busy on various levels.

On the networking side we had a couple of the coffee podiums and after hours affairs which created platforms for promoting business, introducing people to each other and helping especially new business people build their business relationship networks. Towards the end the interest and attendance seemed to have dropped resulting in a couple being cancelled, but we intend to kick off again soon, maybe in a slightly different format.

We also had some business talk events about leadership etc. which were insightful and again food networking opportunities. In our strategy discussions we also think business development is an area we would like to focus on more this year as that also goes hand in hand with job creation.

In terms of building relationships with Knysna Municipality we had numerous formal engagements at top levels, but to be honest as the leadership keep changing it felt very frustrating because just as one feels traction is gained, it all falls flat when the top leadership changes. Engaging on lower levels seems to work better as there is a bit more stability. Politics unfortunately seems to always interfere with everything.

Our link with SANParks also helped us understand estuary better and the impact of for example sewer spillages into the lagoon etc. These things do happen for various reasons but need to be prevented at all costs as we need to protect this beautiful phenomenon and preserve it for the next generation.

The topic of Homeless people remains a problem and a very sensitive matter. Mark has served on the homeless forum and again lots of hours went into planning and creating possible solutions. This is unfortunately a topic that is not so easy to solve and my understanding from the feedback at our Ward 10 meeting on Monday from Councillor Bester was that plans are being drawn up for a shelter but no indication of timeline is available yet. In the meantime, it seems, though, as if street people have more rights than most of us, as law enforcement battles to take action.

Tourism - again I can't tell you how many hours have gone into meetings and drawing up business plans and discussions with various parties etc. But again, politics once again caused everything to fall flat. As we stand, we still don't have a clear plan and picture of what the Municipality's plans are to manage tourism function, especially the all important, destination marketing.

On the positive side

There are a couple of other organizations in town doing wonderful work in making our town look better and safer and we applaud them for all their great work! I am a bit scared to name them as I might leave someone out, as there are more than one organisation doing wonderful work in and around our town. I think this proves that once people start taking action and do things, it does make a difference.

As a chamber this coming year we would like to make an even bigger impact. Unfortunately what we do is not so visible to the man on the street but maybe more behind the scenes. For this we also need funding as believe me, there is lots to do.

At the end of last year the board had a meeting to discuss where we are and how to proceed. At that meeting some of us felt burnt out and we were asking the question, are we making a difference or are we wasting our time. I think we all agreed that although draining, we are making some form of a difference and we all agreed that it is a very important function to fill. How we proceed was the next question which we feel needs more brainstorming. I am not going to go into much more detail of our plans for the year, I will leave that to Mark Sofianos who will lead us in a discussion into formulating the plans for the year a little later.

Before I close off, may I just use this opportunity to thank my fellow board members and executive committee members for another successful year. Remember none of these people got a cent for their efforts, it is all volunteered time and from personal experience I can assure you it is tough to find the time whilst running your own business. To each and every one of you I thank you for every minute of your time and effort that went into the chamber. I do believe we are making a difference and that it does not go by unseen.

To Ypie, who has been our administrator and in fact the glue keeping the chamber together for the past 2 years, a big thank you! Ypie had to resign earlier this year as she had to go back to the Netherlands to handle family matters. Ypie, thank you so much for all you have done and I believe we will still see you involved to some extent.

To Martin Hatchuel, who has kindly put up his hand to assist and take over most of Ypie' s duties, although still early days you have already made a big difference and I believe you have a lot of experience and guidance to give. Thank you for taking on the responsibility and offering to help.

To all our members, thank you for your support during the year, I hope you will all remain members and sign up again this year, and support our networking events.

As you have seen our add last week, which unfortunately needed to be retracted as Dr Sooliman had to go to Turkey and lead a team of rescuers, the topic he was going to talk about was "Active Citizenry". Now I don't know exactly what he was going to say and hope we can still hear it from him directly some time soon, but I can only speculate, but in my mind Active Citizenry probably means something like, it is time that we stop complaining around a braai about things that does not work, roll up our sleeves and start doing something about it.

### 3.0 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The annual financial statements for the year ended 28 February 2022 have been distributed

Some highlights:

- Membership fee income R 76 304 (R 76 260)
- Rental income from billboards and furniture R 48 172 (R 46 430)
- Donations received R 47 762 (R 80 316)
- Income from Networking events R 11 996
- Admin & management expenses R 165 073 (R 171 079)
- Surplus for the year R 19 203 (R 33 427)

As the Chamber is a NPC the balance sheet does not mean much, but at least we remained solvent with an accumulated reserve fund of R 57 772 (R 38 569)

Proposed by Andries Fourie, seconded by Chris Botes

### 4.0 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Mazars in Plett have been the Chamber's auditors for the past couple of financial years. Their reappointment was proposed by Chris Botes, and seconded by Richard Sohn.

### 5.0 MEMBERSHIP FEES

For the current financial year ending 28 February 2023, there are still quite a lot of members who have not yet settled their memberships. We have sent a reminder this week and plead that those be paid before year end please. We need the funds in the account for our financial year end close.

For next year we want to propose that a different structure be followed. To alleviate the admin and also provide with more constant cash flow, we propose to change the membership fees to a

monthly debit order system for a minimal amount. We believe that even to the smallest business a small monthly contribution will be easier on the cash flow on both sides.

We therefore propose that the new structure be as follows:

Small Startup Business	R 50 pm	(R 600 per year)
Medium & Established Business	R 100 pm	(R 1 200 per year)
Well Established Business	R 250 pm	(R 3 000 per year)
Corporate / National Footprint	R 400 pm	(R 4 800 per year)

Additionally any form of donation / contribution to specific projects will be highly appreciated.

## 6.0 OPEN DISCUSSION

MARK SOFIANOS: We should always be mindful that it's a privilege to live in Knysna.

If you don't get involved we cannot hold the municipality to account

What is the function of the Business Chamber?

"Chambers of Commerce are responsible for improving the local business environment and strengthening communities through advocacy, networking, and campaigning. In addition, they create an easy line of communication for business owners to connect with governing bodies (municipality)" (From Google).

I think we're falling down in the first line. The current business environment is not conducive to good business.

In 2022 we engaged on an ongoing basis, with acting municipal managers and department heads on numerous occasions in an attempt to advise on the needs of businesses in Knysna; arranged networking events throughout the year; assisted with promoting Knysna as a destination; and ensured that positive news was released curbing negativity about Knysna.

But I don't think this is enough anymore. It's not benefiting the businesses and residents of the town.

The reality of Knysna: our infrastructure is being vandalised on a daily basis. There has been no water crisis in our town, there's a water pumping crisis because the pumps have been vandalised, they're not there. There's lack of respect and no regard for law and order; lack of maintenance and crumbling infrastructure; mismanagement of funds. Since 2015 Knysna has had 16 municipal managers or acting municipal managers. There's been 10 CFOs or acting CFOs; we have had six different mayors. As a result we have had no vision, no moving forward.

Is it now our job as a Business Chamber to fix things? To hold the people in the municipality accountable? If we don't, who will?

I don't believe we're doing enough as a community and as a business community. We desperately need more people to get involved.

CLR SHARON SABAGH: We have to all pull together in what Dr Imtiaz Sooliman calls Active Citizenry. We have to all pull together: we cannot be pointing fingers all the time. As a ward councillor, I continually get reports of problems (water leaks, sewage), and I keep wanting to say, 'You as a resident of this town have a duty to phone the municipality and report the problems, and get a reference number. Then if it's not fixed timeously, report it to your ward councillor with the reference number so that we can escalate.' This is the process that needs to be followed. Councillors can do so much more if the residents of the town take responsibility for the things they can, so that we can get on with our jobs of providing oversight.

With regard to our current situation in the municipality: our finances are in a dire state. We have a municipal budget of about R1 billion; our debtors book is sitting at R403 million; our collection rate has declined; in January alone we did not have sufficient funds to meet our salaries. Had it not been for a short term facility we secured from Standard Bank of R 20 million (it has to be repaid by the end of June of this year), we would not have been able to pay our salaries. Our creditors are sitting on 90 days plus; in terms of the Municipal Finances Management Act, we are supposed to pay creditors within 30 days. We are now currently applying for external loans of R 65 million, this against Provincial Treasury's recommendation, which called for remedial action and a recovery plan. This plan was supposed to be with Provincial Treasury on the 9th of December. They were given a five day extension, but we as councillors of this municipality have yet to have sight of that recovery plan.

In our audit committee meeting at the beginning of January, a presentation was made, and in response our current acting CFO could not answer questions. In terms of the external loan, she was asked a question by our previous acting Municipal Manager, Mr, Jacobs, who asked what are the commitments in terms of existing external loans, and what has been committed to the end of June of this year. She could only answer as to what has been spent, but not as to what is committed to the end of the financial year. This is unacceptable.

If we as residents don't come together and work together we're going to continue to have problems.

Overtime is extremely high. There is no control over quality service from our contractors; it's substandard work. You all know – pipes break, roads crumble. I have been saying for so long – why are we paying our contractors, if they are paying such poor work. Flag them on the system, there must be a service level agreement, terminate the service of those who don't deliver.

If it hadn't been for Revive Knysna, this town would have been absolutely appalling. They are an example of what we need in this town. There are so many of us that can do so much more for

our town. Our tourism industry – we had huge interaction with them last year. We were putting together the team, we were creating a relationship with the sector where we had people who were engaging with us and we were really moving forward with this, but it's come to a grinding halt. I received a call today from one of the people that was involved in the Oyster Festival last year. He asked what are we going to do; we still don't know what's happening with the Oyster Festival. It's the beginning of February, the Oyster Festival takes place at the end of June. The trouble is we go two steps forward and three steps back. I'm pleading with you, don't sit back and just accept it. Get on the phone, complain, send them emails. We need to be active, we need to take responsibility, we need to send the information out.

We in the municipality have just gone through the process of changing our valuation roll. I've looked at a lot of the figures, and a lot of the valuations are extremely high. you have to object to that process, and if you don't, your rates and taxes are going to go up exponentially high, and it's going to impact your pockets. I want to remind you all, please, look at the general valuation roll and make sure your property is fairly valued based on a valuation date 1 July, 2022. If you are not in agreement, make sure you get your valuation in by the 28th of February.

Residents can get involved through your ward committee. There are 11 ward committees. I know that the business chamber had representatives on most of the ward committees. Residents can get involved through your ward committee. You are entitled to go and sit in, listen, and participate. You are entitled to make submissions to your ward committee representatives, which are tabled through the ward committee and from there into council. We are currently going through the budget process, with public participation. Not enough residents get involved in that process.

All I'm saying is get behind your residents association, homeowners association, business chamber, work together and collectively because we will only be stronger together.

#### QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR ABOUT PUTTING THE MUNICIPALITY UNDER ADMINISTRATION

SHARON SABBAGH: This is a real possibility. There are a number of boxes we can tick in terms of taking it under administration to the extent that we dissolve council and we go for a new election. Then we have to fight and make sure that we have different councillors in, and hopefully come in with a better group of people. If that's what the residents want, write to Minister Bredell, through the Business Chamber perhaps so that someone can keep control of the letters, consolidate the complaints, and make sure all the emails get attached and sent off.

MARK SOFIANOS: As you start looking closer to the town, there are more issues. The homeless is a major problem, and it affects every single one of us. Once again, the council has failed by not providing a shelter. And this affects our businesses. Litter is another major problem. Because the council is not providing us with adequate dumping facilities. So as a result, smaller businesses are dumping illegally. Is it not our responsibility to champion the council to make

sure there are proper facilities. Vandalism is another problem because the municipality is not providing proper security for their own facilities.

So my question tonight is what is the way forward?

We've used that phrase active citizenry. Do we operate in a safe environment? Are we all happy with the way we're operating our businesses, the way we're moving around town – for tourists specifically – it's not what we want. Do we receive assistance and support from the municipality? Anyone who's in construction will tell you it's impossible to do business in this town. There is no will to make things happen. Is growth and development going to happen in our town? Is good growth and development going to happen? Is there proper long-term planning for our town, or are we allowing random developments where unscrupulous developers can climb in.

Are we able to build relationships with the municipal authorities and their departments. At one point we were. We could sit round a table and they would listen and we could give advice. Now, there's nothing. We've always tried to take that soft approach of 'we'll help you, we'll guide you, we'll stand by you.' I don't think that's the right approach anymore.

And lastly I want to emphasise: do we stand together as a community. Our biggest problem is that we don't. All too often, we're too busy, it's not my problem, somebody else will do it. But the fact is, it is our problem now.

What should we be as a business chamber?

JOHAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, FROM THE FLOOR: I do think there is a fundamental problem with how the business chamber is operating within the context of society. I believe there should be a four-pillar society. There is the political arm, which needs to do what it does. Then there's an implementer of the things that need to be done, and that's supposed to happen with the municipality. In some areas it's working, and in some areas it's not. So the implementing pillar of the four phases of society should be the responsibility of the municipality. And then there's the social arm, which we are sitting with the issues of homelessness, the social and environmental impact pillar of the society, which we have abundance of. But then there's a fourth pillar of society, which is the business pillar, which needs to come from this chamber. This means that we need to take the lead, and by taking the lead we must ask ourselves, do we as a chamber have a 2030 plan – not driven by the spatial framework of this town, but driven by what we as business see what's important for this town.

One of the problems I see is that we have no one from the implementation arm here at this meeting – officials or politicians. We as leaders need to build the relationships we need, otherwise it's not happening. Looking at examples like the youngest mayor – Pappas – how does he get it right? It's by building bridges, which I don't see here.

The leading roll needs to come from us, and we need to develop a longer-term vision for this town driven by the people in this town.

MARK SOFIANOS: I think we are being led as ratepayers and businesspeople. The tail's wagging the dog instead of the other way round, and I think that's where we are going wrong. So do we have the mandate from our members to go to council and say, 'this is what we want'?

WILLIE CILLIERS, CHAIRMAN GEORGE CHAMBER, CHAIRMAN AHI WESTERN CAPE: Shocking to hear what's happening in Knysna, but we are facing similar issues in George.

You've mentioned bridges. We have to build bridges every day.

First of all, it's vital for the business chamber to get their house in order. In our attempts to get a good relationship with the George Municipality we have a fixed first Thursday meeting with the mayor, Every month it's a different sector – tourism, estate agents, development, etc.

From a chamber perspective, we are non-profit companies and therefore ruled and guided by the Companies Act. You already have a board, you have directors (board members). But it's a huge job for those four or five directors on the board. But there's a specific new word to help us to get a best practice framework – you mention the word 'exco'. This comes from a voluntary system. We're in a formal space now, and the Act requires board sub-committees responsible to the board. So we must determine our key priority areas, building around those five or ten areas, building cohesion in the town.

I will guide you to get through this process of transforming from an exco to board sub-committees. Tasks are delegated from the board to the subcommittees, which must report back to you. You can this way bring in any expert, and let them help build those bridges, but the chamber must take the lead.

kpIn the chamber, there should be an intelligence section where you can gather business intelligence so that you can know what's coming up in the town. So intelligence must be a board sub-committee.

Lastly, the AHI was part of the process of creating the economic framework for the Western Cape, including Knysna. This is finished, and the premier mentioned this in his SOPA speech today. The focus is growth for jobs. If you can't create jobs, there will soon be chaos in Knysna, so business has a responsibility.

The chamber is central to implementing the framework.

CLR PETER BESTER: It shouldn't be us (the politicians) driving our opinions in council. It should be that you guys are the policy makers, the ideas generators, the visionaries, challenging me, instructing me, where I must take this town. The way I see the business chamber is that the chamber decides their main focuses and they send those issues through to



council, said to council this is where we have to implement changes, make opportunities available. So my vision for the chamber is that you should hold me accountable to ensure that we bring this town to the level that you want to be at.

You should be the driving force, and I should be the implementer.

MARK SOFIANOS: We need people to step up and take part in the chamber. (See list below)

Finance is also an issue. It's very easy for Revive Knysna to survive, because people can immediately see what they're doing – the verges, the planting, the upkeep, the maintenance. So does our chamber start taking on projects that can be visually seen, do we start challenging the municipality on being accountable, where we're making a difference. That takes time and effort, and sometimes it takes professional legal advice.

ELMAY BOUWER: With who in Knysna do we actually have to start building bridges.

WILLIE CILLIERS: You start with the mayor, and thereafter with the municipal manager.

QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR: What is happening with the Oyster Festival?

MARK SOFIANOS: This is where our voice needs to be stronger. The chamber has to become a far greater voice for far more people. Our ratepayers association is weak or non-existent or dysfunctional. So the business chamber needs to become the voice for the people of Knysna. Most people who live here are in some way involved in business – you do business every day. If you go shopping, you're doing business. So the business chamber can be everybody's voice. There have to be several people out there who can assist us to drive into 2023.

The new vision for the chamber for 2023 is to be the voice of the people of Knysna, to make a difference, and backing up and giving support to our businesses.

CHRIS BOTES FROM THE FLOOR: If the right structures are in place, there will naturally be more people to assist. There are legal frameworks that we are not using to our benefit. We keep thinking of the legal framework as being a negative thing (I'm going to lay charges, etc.), but there is a perfect legal solution for tourism in this town. It's been the same solution for the past five years. But because we couldn't get a unified voice from the different organisation, the council conveniently disregarded that legal structure. So we keep looking at other solutions, instead of asking what are we legally allowed to do, and how do we enforce our legal options.

The business chamber is not inherently designed to be a tourism organisation. The business chamber needs to work in conjunction with a tourism organisation – they have different stakeholders in different industries and they have to work in conjunction with residents associations, ratepayers association. For example, upgrading the Main Street. The property owners on the Main Street are the only ones allowed to form a CID – central improvement district – but not all property owners are in the tourism industry, so they must go a ratepayers to

form that CID and say, 'as ratepayers, we are willing to create change.' Then you can bring the tourism organisation in and say, 'we will market the change that you are doing, and we will consult with other stakeholders, about what the right approach will be.'

With the structures in place, the structures supercede the personalities.

Central improvement districts have been known to work yet we are not using that structure. There are successful private-public partnership tourism agencies between municipalities and private memberships. At the moment, when you say to a municipal official, "I would like the following," they say the law says you can't do that. But the law also says there's a lot of things you can do.

ELMAY BOUWER: The chamber cannot go to the municipality and speak to the mayor without a mandate from their members. The board needs to approve something. But if you only have 15 members who are willing to pay the membership fee, they are going to say, 'one behalf of who are you talking' – correctly so.

Unlike previous chambers which only lasted year, this chamber is doing exceptionally well, with highly competent people. The Knysna Ratepayers Association is non-existent at the moment, but we have that setup. But we sat in meeting after meeting about tourism, we did a plan, we met with the LED, that was going to council. I wrote to council and asked how many workshops they still need. We are standing together, but every time it's blocked, Every time it's thrown in front of us, 'on behalf of who do you talk.'

MARK SOFIANOS: People have to understand that by being part of the Business Chamber you are facilitating business within this town. You are incubating business. So you might not think it's helping me personally right now, but it actually is. We all benefit because we're all a part of that business chamber.

You don't always see where your membership money goes, but it does make things happen.

ELIZABETH-ANNE VERTUE: If we all undertake to get five or ten people to join we will then at least have something to do.

MARK SOFIANOS: A membership drive is critical. Social media is almost more critical. Aside from what Revive Knysna does which is visual, their social media is second to none.

CHRISTOPHER BEZUIDENHOUT KNYSNA MUNICIPALITY: I take exception when people say the municipality is incompetent. Speaking for myself, I'm not one of those. I believe in the basics – we must go back to the basics. The municipality must do what it must do, and the chamber must do what it must do in terms of the functions of a chamber. The unfortunate flip side to that is that you need time: nothing will come right if you don't put in time.

MARK SOFIANOS: Something we did say as a chamber this last year was – we don't want to refer to the Knysna Municipality as being dysfunctional. Some of the people within that organisation aren't, and we should rather say 'that particular person is not doing their job.' When we go back to assuring municipal accountability, it's people that need to be held accountable. If we are all more aware of who's doing what – and that needs to be one of the chamber's functions – is to inform everybody of who's not doing what so that we can all hold that person accountable.

WILLIE CILLIERS: At the George Business Chamber we set up a red tape desk within the chamber. Any red tape issues are reported to the business chamber, it's noted and reported to the municipality with a time frame for response/action.

JAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: We as a chamber have to create a vision of what we want to see this town become. Vision is followed by strategy. Strategy is not the actions, it is the broad outline of what we should do. There should be a strategy on tourism, there should be a strategy on environment, there should be a strategy on safety. Once we have those strategies, we go over to structures because structures support the strategies.

The fact that we are going back to the council to complain about certain things that are not happening, there's a structure that we can follow, there are certain rules that we can follow. Once the structures are in place you go over to the details of what to do when we tackle the low-hanging fruit – for example the tourism strategy, and in this case the Oyster Festival.

Structures are followed by relationships and sometimes we forget that we can do the vision, the strategies, and the structures, but without the relationships we will not get anywhere. Relationships beat everything else.

I asked the mayor if he'd been invited to this meeting, and he said he hadn't. Now how are we to build relationships if we don't invite him here. If he is not understanding how we want to take this town forward, how will he support us? The role of the mayor is to listen to where we're going with this town. The same with the MM. He should have been here.

Finally, after relationships comes performance. If you have this in place, things will start changing. Performance is changed by holding the people accountable and following the structures.

MARK SOFIANOS: This is why we're saying to people like you to come and be a part of the chamber, more than just a member. Whether it be on a sub-committee or the board. We need people to drive this.

ELMAY BOUWER: The department concerned put a lot of work into the tender with the private sector for the Oyster Festival. It did go out last year for the events of the council – not only the Oyster Festival. It was a requirement that tenderers had to be at the compulsory meeting. 18 different companies and people that attended. When the tender was due, three companies

submitted bids. We sat with the municipal representative and explained why it was important to award the tender timeously, we explained the implications of, for example, being at WTM (World Travel Market) in Cape Town in April if we wanted to attract people here in June. They are now not sticking to the deadlines to award the tender that was supposed to happen end of January. That is where the chamber could play a role, is to now pressurise. The reason it has not been awarded is because in council, the second tender for the destination marketing was supposed to come up, budgets were unclear, but nobody wants to commit.

MARK SOFIANOS: This is where the chamber needs to know about things, so that we can go back to council.

RICHARD SOHN: In response to Jan van der Westhuizen. The board of the Chamber has engaged with the council for approximately two years. We started engaging and trying to have a good relationship with them, and initially, when Dawie Adonis was there, it started to work, along the lines that you mentioned. We got to a certain point, the players changed, and it was downhill from there. When you are trying to engage with someone who is not willing to engage, it's debilitating and frustrating. A lot of us from the chamber just feel that approach isn't working. So we look at alternatives. My view is that we are not going to get it right as a chamber until the town is placed under administration, where you have an outside party attend to the administration.

JAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: That engagement with the mayor is followed by a document, and MOU, and that document goes from mayor to mayor.

SHARON SABBAGH: Your Chamber does everything right. The problem is that since Dawie Adonis left, we've had so many municipal managers, I think we're now on our seventh, and new ones that come in don't have institutional knowledge. It takes them time to pick up. So there's no opportunity for the chamber to build that relationship going forward. We've had more than six CFOs in the recent past.

JACQUES BRINK FROM THE FLOOR: As a resident of Knysna, my personal feeling is I'm basically finding corruption here. My rates every month go into someone's salary who is not working. What do you do when you don't get service? You don't pay for it. But we can't do that. There must be a mechanism. Who appoints the municipal manager? Who signs off on that guy's salary?

Administration is the only way forward.

RICHARD SOHN: This is a debate we could have as ratepayers. You can't not pay your rates. What happens if everyone in this room doesn't pay within 30 days? You pay in 60 or 90?

SHARON SABBAGH: As a councillor I cannot encourage a rates boycott, because that's what you're saying. I'd been in breach of the code of conduct for council. I understand your frustration. I've spoken about our finances. I would say we are insolvent. We do not receive

enough money on a monthly basis to meet our monthly expenses. We have to rely on overdraft facilities to see us through.

CHRISTOPHER BEZUIDENHOUT: The award for the successful tender has been made. There's now a 21-day cooling off period. The Oyster Festival dates have been set.

KEITH DODDS (SEDFIELD) FROM THE FLOOR: Something that works for us. When there's an issue that needs to be raised with the municipality, we get the residents and businesses together and coordinate a response. We contact our councilors and ask if we can coordinate it together because a lone voice doesn't work. But 50, 100 voices make a difference. It's coordinated and structured with the guidance of councilors who care. It's hard work and it takes a lot of time, but it's worth it in the end. I would encourage you to work together.

MARK SOFIANOS: Let's grow this body. We will try and sit and have a brainstorming session amongst the current board, and please, we would like you to step up.

Regarding subs: We are trying to go over to a monthly debit order system, rather than annual payments. Small start-up businesses R50 per month, medium and established R100 and R250, and corporate or national R400 per month.

And the big one: any donations are welcome. All NPOs survive on donations.

Thank you.

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#### HELPERS

- Lester Day - Thesen Islands HOA - [lesterday@icloud.com](mailto:lesterday@icloud.com)
- Elizabeth-Anne Vertue - [training@emporiumknysna.co.za](mailto:training@emporiumknysna.co.za)
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