

About the DRA

Dullstroom Ratepayers' Association is a fully constituted non-profit organization set up to represent the community interests of all Dullstroom residents and ratepayers.

Please contact us at dullstroom@vodamail.co.za

We Care

Your newsletter from the DRA
www.dullstroomvillage.co.za

Newsletter March 2021

It is very pleasing to see that in many respects our town is pretty close to normal due to the relaxation of most of the COVID restrictions. However, we must not allow complacency to set in and it is important that everyone obeys the remaining restrictions, particularly in terms of wearing face masks and social distancing. Having said that, a number of functions aimed at 'locals' have been held during the last couple of months. Munro Deysel has organised several Village Markets on the village green and special Easter market is planned for 3rd April.

The Mpumalanga 400 off-road rally is again coming back to Dullstroom and will be held over the weekend of 27/28 March. Sadly, due to the COVID restrictions, the event will not be open to spectators though the vehicles may well be seen driving from the village green towards the two different routes being used over the weekend. This event brings a lot of publicity to our town as well as revenue as local accommodation and eating establishments are used. Once again, the sponsors are assisting our two Sakhelwe schools by donating school shoes to fifty students at each.

The main R540 provincial road between Belfast and Lydenburg, through Dullstroom, has recently been the setting for a number of accidents – one, unfortunately fatal and another person with other serious injuries. For about ten kilometers either side of Dullstroom, some re-surfacing took place late last year but was then delayed (excuse given as COVID-related !!) but seems to have recommenced to some degree. During the last week or two, there does appear to have been further work done on the stretch between Belfast and Dullstroom – ironically immediately following the fatal accident ! However the 53-kilometer road between Dullstroom and Lydenburg is in a very bad



state as can be seen from these photos taken on 3rd March (courtesy Cathi Watson). DRA Committee member Mike Whelan has influenced the filling in of potholes within Dullstroom itself and has erected new STOP signs. The existing ones are being refurbished and will be re-installed on the side roads as soon as possible. The DRA is also sponsoring road markings which will commence as soon as

the current roadworks are completed. Nevertheless, we do have major concerns regarding the volume of heavy lorries passing through our town. A recent ad hoc survey by DRA Committee Member Malcolm Siebert was done over a total of fourteen daytime hours on different days in January and February. He recorded a total 330 heavy vehicles passing through of which 238 were articulated ore-carrying vehicles. Apart from the impact of these heavy lorries on roads not designed or built for such weights, it is very worrying that of the total 330 lorries recorded, 92 either failed to stop at STOP streets or were exceeding the speed limit. As a consequence, the DRA has



DRA Committee 2020/21

Mike Allen (Chair) Peter St Clair (Vice Chair & Secretary) David Simpson (Treasurer)
Malcolm Siebert George Skinner Mike Whelan Fiona Jones

written to the new MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport requesting a meeting with senior management from his department to see what actions can be taken.

Another project which the DRA is supporting is the clearance of alien vegetation, primarily in the Dullstroom Nature Reserve (Grootsuikerboskop). This ecological project is being spearheaded by Frans Krige and utilises local labour



who, in addition to being paid, are offered the cut down eucalyptus and other alien trees for use as firewood. Frans decided the priority should be to clear areas where *Protea roupillea* naturally occur with pine tree removal being foremost. Pine trees spread very quickly through seed dispersal by the wind and create clumps of alien trees which then destroy the habitat of various indigenous plants, thus causing a decline in biodiversity. These trees, in

particular, have caused some impact on our local Gurney's Sugarbird and Malachite sunbirds as well as various species of butterfly. The Dullstroom Heritage Society is also assisting financially with this ongoing project.

And now on to the topic we have talked about for so long – the Municipality ! As we reported in an earlier newsletter, DRA Chairman Mike Allen and I met with the 'new' Municipal Manager (George Mthimunye) last November and discussed many local issues with him. He promised to investigate and respond in due course but this has not happened. On 14th February 2021, the DRA wrote to the Executive Mayor, Council Speaker, our Ward Councillor and the Municipal Manager requesting an urgent meeting to discuss our concerns. There has been neither acknowledgement of the letter or response to it ! Many of us have found over the last year or so that our communications are totally ignored – and this certainly includes account queries, leading to unpaid rates and service accounts. We do not believe this situation can be permitted to continue and consequently the DRA Committee decided at their last meeting to escalate our concerns to Provincial Government and, if necessary, to National level. We have now written to the new MEC for Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs, Ms Busisiwe Shiba, requesting that she meet with us as soon as possible to discuss our concerns and put in place measures to resolve the failing infrastructure as well as educate municipal staff in customer relations and response to communications.

Due to various circumstances, two local large residential townships who have previously enrolled their owners 'en bloc' as members of the DRA have withdrawn this option. Whilst one of them has made a donation to DRA funds – for which we thank them – our strength in dealing with the authorities lies in us being able to state definitively that we represent a significant (if not, majority) of owners and residents in Dullstroom and immediate area. Whilst we must reluctantly accept the withdrawal of 'block membership', we still believe that residents and owners on these complexes – as well, of course, as all and any residents of Dullstroom – should have the option of joining the DRA of their own accord. We have been fortunate in enrolling several new arrivals to Dullstroom but hope that the residents who are no longer automatically members by virtue of their home-owners organisation will join us as individuals. Anyone wishing to join or re-join the DRA is asked to complete the membership application form available on our website www.dullstroomvillage.co.za

We have been told by a manager at Nkangala District that they will be assisting our municipality in enforcing registration of all guest houses, B&B's, self-catering premises etc. as defined in the Accommodation By-law which was promulgated in 2016. This by-law is available (as are many others) on our website.

Just a few closing items....

- The DRA has donated R3,000 to DDD in appreciation of the work done by that organisation in keeping our town so clean and tidy
- Our Treasurer advises that we have received three payments in respect of annual DRA subscription of R120 but there is no name reflected on the bank statement. If you have paid your subs recently, please let us know so that we can allocate the payments accordingly.
- Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions there have been no recent meetings of either the Ward Committee or the Community Police Forum (CPF). It is hoped that Ward Committee meetings will soon be re-established and we believe that a community meeting to discuss the future and composition of the CPF will be held within the next few weeks.

Till next time.....

Kind regards,



Peter St Clair,
Vice Chairman & Secretary

By the way, you don't necessarily have to be a ratepayer to join our Association ! Membership is open to all ratepayers AND/OR residents of Dullstroom & Sakhelwe. Do you have a neighbour or friend who is not a member ? Ask them to join and support us.

Not a member ?? Join now !! Only R120/year