

Tough winter for those with unpaid electricity bills

Continued from p1

The Mayor, Hendricks, urged those with outstanding debts to visit the Accounts/Income section as soon as possible, warning that if there is no arrangement in place about paying the debts off, the municipality will cut or block the defaulters' electricity.

Comments and complaints about the high electricity and water bills have been quite prolific on social media, not only in Kouga, but in Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and some other SA towns as well, with some saying that they are struggling to put food on the table. So those in this situation are only doing part payments of their bills, or not at all, many have said. "Do we let our children starve, or do we pay our bills?" is a common refrain. "Now

we face eating raw food and freezing," is another.

Those Kouga residents who have electricity and internet are advised that the municipality also has an online service which will enable them to receive their accounts via email or to view their accounts online on the municipal website. Once registered, residents can access their municipal account no matter where they are - as long as they have access to email or our website.

The online registration process is as follows:

- Contact the municipality's Income section at Jeffreys Bay on 042 200 2200 to obtain an access key.
- Go to the municipal website at

www.kouga.gov.za.

- Click on the "Ratepayers Info System" link on the home page.

- Click on the "Register Here" option
- Complete the info as requested. This will include a user name, password, the account holder's name, surname and ID number, the postal and physical addresses, at least one contact phone number and email address.

- Once you have completed this section, your login name and password will be forwarded to the email address used during registration. You can use the link in the email to confirm registration and login to the Ratepayers Info System.

- Once you have logged in, you can link your existing Kouga municipal account's to your user profile. Do this by clicking on

the "click here to link an account to your user ID" icon.

- Fill in your account number and the access key supplied by the Income Department. Your account will now appear under the "My Accounts" section.

- If you have more than one account, you do not have to register again. You can simply add a new account to your existing profile using the account number and access key. Please note that a different access key is required for each account.

In addition to paying their accounts at municipal offices and via internet banking, residents can pay at external pay points such as the Post Office, pay@Ackermans, Shoprite/Checkers/Usave, Spar, Pick n Pay, Pet Stores, EasyPay, MyeBills and Boxer.

Objections to valuations have now been closed

More than 300 property owners from the Kouga region have objected to the new valuations of their properties.

Those Kouga homeowners, who have submitted an objection but have not yet received a reference number, are asked to contact our Valuations team in Jeffreys Bay as a matter of urgency to ensure their objections is on file.

There are fewer objections than the 1000 objections in 2013. Following the objections, the previous Kouga municipal government, made changes in 2014.

Recently the new DA-lead Kouga municipal government announced further changes had been effected.

Consequently fewer objections were received this year compared to those of the previous valuation process.

Some Kouga estate agents have said that properties have been undervalued by the municipality. Some agents told this paper that some wealthy Kouga residents are not happy their properties are undervalued, while the less wealthy working class are happy they are paying less in rates.

However, Richard Andeme of Pam Golding Properties, St Francis Bay, says it appears that the recent municipal valuations have been carried out reasonably accurately, and that there are less objections than in the past.

The new General Valuation Roll will come

into effect in the new financial year, starting June 2018, and will determine how much property owners are expected to pay for rates and taxes.

The valuation process was conducted by independent company DDP Valuers.

The first draft was submitted to Council on January 31 this year, following which property owners were invited to submit objections if they disagreed with the new valuations. The objection period closed on 30 April.

Hendricks said the total value of the new roll was R27.3 billion.

The Valuations team can be contacted at 042 200 2157 or mv@income@kouga.gov.za or rvanvuuren@kouga.gov.za

No life guards on Kouga beaches

Kouga Municipality has said there are no longer lifeguards or shark spotters on duty at Kouga beaches.

Beaches, like Seal Point beach in Cape St Francis of St Francis Bay's beach and Jeffreys Bay beaches have no life guards currently as the official beach season has come to a close. Anyone who enters the ocean at this time does so at own risk," the municipality said, warning people that the sea is unpredictable and must always be treated with caution.



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Try Our Word Puzzle

See how many words you can make from the letters. The words are no less than four letters. Every word has to contain the middle, bold letter. The goal is to also find the nine letter word(s). No plural nouns, capital letters, slang, or foreign language words (unless accepted in the Oxford English dictionary) this month's puzzle 96 words essential, 60 words good, 30 words fun. Note: Words ending in 's' like 'jays' have been allowed. The correct solution is on p14.

Word Puzzle compiled by Bev Mortimer

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|---|----------|---|
| P | A | E |
| L | E | T |
| C | S | C |

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