

New R4m library for Sea Vista

Editorial: Bev Mortimer

The impoverished suburb of Sea Vista in St Francis Bay will have a brand new modern and high-tech library, costing more than R4-million, in September this year when its doors are scheduled to open.

Sea Vista residents have been waiting for this exciting and momentous development to be completed since 2015 when the previous Kouga Municipality switched on the green light for the library to go ahead. This municipal government allocated a plot of ground in the default CBD area of Sea Vista, between the Clinic and Community Hall, for the purpose of building a library there.

Three years ago, upon its establishment in the Kouga area, Kouga Wind Farm (KWF), in terms of its socio-economic development programme, undertook to fund the construction of this new library to serve the needs of the residents of the Sea Vista community. This came after KWF held extensive consultations with the local community and a library was identified as a top priority.

After an agreement was entered into between the municipality in 2016 and the wind farm, the planning process started with further input from Kouga Municipal Library Services that falls under the umbrella of the Eastern Cape Department of Sport, Recreation Arts and Culture (DSRAC). As Kouga Municipality renders library services on behalf of DSRAC, it engages with this government body regarding the operational requirements of the library.

The library in essence belongs to the DSRAC, which is ultimately responsible for the day to day running of the facility, the hiring and payment of library personnel, the procuring of fixtures, fittings, equipment, books (in conjunction with local Rotary Club), specialised security systems and to provide for necessary maintenance, from time to time.

The library was built to fulfill Sea Vista community needs and from concept to finish the library took two years to build and there was interaction between all stakeholders to realise this dream.

According to local St Francis Bay architect, Trevor Tennant, the library consists of two floors with the adults section at ground level and the children's at the first floor level connected by way of a staircase and a lift for the disabled.

The two sections are served by centrally located book lending and return desks,

bisecting the lending library from the reference and computer station areas. Ancillary accommodation, such as the librarians' office, toilets, stores, and a kitchenette, is situated linearly on the southern side of the building.

The form of the building has a simple shed-type of shape with ubiquitous stone guards serving the dual function as sun control elements. It is intended that the Library serve as a catalyst for the general upgrade of this precinct where the majority of the 'public building' structures have reached their sell-by dates.

The building is nearing completion and stands out hierarchically as an important building in an otherwise typical township context begging for urban infra structural upgrade.

Other local professionals involved in the building of the library were engineer, Athol Hodgkinson; project manager, Chris Milne; and Oupa Jack as the contracting company.

According to Trevor Arosi of the wind farm, the library and IT Centre that is currently still under construction has seen the community pull together, with a number of local players throwing their weight behind the project. Kouga Municipality provided free approval of plans and site allocation and has also undertaken to continue to waive water and electricity charges.

All building materials have been locally sourced, with suppliers providing up to 90 days' credit, while the local St Francis Rotary Club has engaged with its national structure about supplying books. The St Francis Rotary Club is supporting the library by sourcing books through the Rotary Book Distribution centre (part of the Rotary Humanitarian Aid centre in Bedfordford, Johannesburg) and various other charitable organisations such as Bible and Light to Read.

Arosi said the Sea Vista community was most isolated with little to no community facilities for the residents and particularly scholars. The only schools, apart from the local primary school, are in Humansdorp. Pupils use a bus service and straight after school have to catch the bus back to their areas where there is no library, access to books the Internet or teaching.

The library will enable adults and pupils to study and do research he said. The project has created 18 jobs for locals during the build phase, with more to follow as the finishing work begins..



Sea Vista library nearing completion - Photo: KWF

Everything needed for building of the library has been sourced locally except for the lift which was bought from the Western Cape. Local St Francis people were involved for labour, materials, construction services, and professional people in related trades such as the architect and project manager.

The official opening of the library will occur in September this year. KWF will then move onto another project in the Kouga community.

Arosi says the main areas of social economic development are education and skills development and a library is essential in this regard. KWF CLO, would love to collaborate with many local partners, who wish to give something back to the community. For example, as it

does with retired professionals and with organisations, such as the Sea Vista Rainmakers group of women involved in social uplifting of the community. This latter group has three groups under its umbrella: Sibanya, a group of ladies involved in community service; Ladies in Motion, who render a variety of uplifting services; and the Home-based Care group of ladies.

The Rainmakers are delighted about the development of the library as it will enable them to help the community further, Arosi says. The Rainmaker ladies will be able to further their studies at the library and do research in their various fields of work, plus use information gained to improve the community.



Architect's impression of the inside of the library by Trevor Tennant

Donations for Sea Vista Library Wanted

Donations from the St Francis Bay community for additional items that will be needed at this new library are warmly welcomed and can be placed inside a box, with kind courtesies and thanks to Super Spar St Francis Bay.

The KWF has arranged with SuperSpar St Francis Bay to place a box at the entrance to the store for the collection from the St Francis Bay community of:

- * Books
- * DVDs
- * CDs
- * Bean Bags
- * Cushions
- * Pictures
- * Murals
- * Hanging Rugs
- * Carpets
- * Earphones
- * Old magazines
- * Journals
- * Side tables
- * Lamps etc.

For further details contact: Trevor Arosi on 071 682 5235 or trevor@kougawindfarm.co.za

Managing the building of the Sea Vista library

Thulani Nkuma is managing the building of the Sea Vista Library.

He was appointed by contractor Oupa Jack to oversee the day-to-day site activities, to ensure workmanship is of top quality, as well as to communicate with the principal agent and engineer about adjustments to the structure.

This 28-year-old hails from KwaNomsamo and has a National Certificate (Level 4) in civil engineering and building construction. He works hard to ensure that the residents of Sea Vista receive a building that will become a centre of information and learning.

According to principal agent on the project, Chris Milne, Thulani has broader talents and a special passion for architectural computer drafting and is mostly self-taught. The KWF is currently sponsoring his advanced training on Revit Architecture – computer-aided design software to help him design 3D models of buildings.



Thulani Nkuma is managing and overseeing day to day activities at the Sea Vista Library.