

Gamtoos residents' water blues

Water, water everywhere... and not a drop to drink' in Hankey and Patensie!

This is the lament from these towns' residents who have to stand in long queues to get bottled water because the Kouga Municipality and the Water Department is not lifting water shedding for them.

Even though the dam level has now increased considerably (45.7% on 17 September) the municipality has not stopped the water shedding. And although the Department said water restrictions should not be lifted in a statement after the lovely rains in Kouga early September, it did not mention water shedding.

Asked for clarity why the towns were being 'punished' as residents there feel they are, the municipality responded by saying water restrictions are imposed by the department of Water and Sanitation. 'As the Kouga Dam level dropped, the department restricted how much water the municipality could draw from the dam for domestic use at Hankey and Patensie. Once the allotted amount is reached, the supply is switched off.'

'Therefore, while there is more water in the dam, the amount of water the municipality is allowed to extract for Hankey and Patensie is the same as before. Without water rationing, the towns use up to three times more than the allotted amount.

'That is why water rationing cannot yet be lifted.'

St Francis Chronicle tried to get further clarity from the department but the press spokesperson was off at time of going to print.

Water-shedding was implemented in Hankey and Patensie when the level of the Kouga Dam fell to below 7% around 14 August this year and the situation was then pronounced as being 'critical' by the mayor. Gamtoos residents maintain the situation is no longer 'critical'.

Water to the towns is switched off for the greater part of the day, seven days a week, starting on Monday. There are two 'washing days' during which water is available for a bit longer. These days are Wednesdays and Saturdays. On these days water is available from 4:30 am to 11 am in the mornings and then again from 4 pm to 8 pm in the evenings. On the other five days, water is available only from 4:30 am to 8 pm in the evening.

At the time of implementing water shedding mayor, Horatio Hendricks, said the municipality would continue its programme to conserve and increase the water supply to Hankey and Patensie.

Meanwhile residents in these affected towns are angry. A snap survey mid September revealed that people felt it is inconvenient to switch the water off at sporadic times.

They are upset that the municipality does not stick to specific times. So one can get home and not be able to bath or shower before work the next day. Also residents would prefer a

limit tariff where the water does not actually get cut off but if people use over a certain amount each day they will then have to pay more. This would be more convenient. People feel that it is good to conserve for the future but would rather have a trickle system not a complete cut off system.

Many residents understood the situation even though they were not happy because the mayor had asked residents to 'bear with us'. But now they say they have suffered enough. Particularly the elderly are suffering because they have to look after babies and small children while the parents go to work. They are finding it hardest to wash children's bodies or their clothes or wash babies' bottles.

Although they don't have water-shedding some Gamtoos farmers are also unhappy about continued water restrictions. A spokesperson for the Gamtoos Irrigation board said an application had been made to the department of Water to lower water restrictions to farmers from 60% to 30%.

In the town of Hankey a couple of weeks ago residents told St Francis Chronicle they were unhappy to be penalised for using more water while residents in some of the main towns in Kouga are still squandering water - yet these other water squanderers were not experiencing any water-shedding. 'Why is just this section of the population being punished?' they ask. 'Surely there should be rotational water shedding over the whole of Kouga?' they further maintain.

The Gamtoos residents' grievances are growing following the Kouga Municipality's decision to implement water-shedding in the area of these two Gamtoos towns in the month of August. The municipality, however, maintains the usage in the Hankey town is above the quota, which contributes to shortages as the Gamtoos Irrigation Board turns off the supply once the quota has been reached.

The municipality says residents are asked to minimise the water they use when the supply is restored so pipes can fill up and the supply can reach more households.

Some Hankey households, however, have little or no tap water available, even during the advertised 'water hours' because the water is extracted from the pipes faster than can be filled up when the supply is turned on.

Fortunately though, some water is being distributed to Hankey after wonderful donations have been received from companies and organisations. Hankey residents can pick up one 5 litre bottle per household per day from the Vusumuzi Landu Hall or Hankey municipal offices. Water can also be collected from the rainwater tanks that were installed earlier this year.

Anyone who would like to donate bottled water should contact Gert Kruger at the municipal Infrastructure and Engineering Department on 081 528 3721.

fountains mall is turning 10

Come join the fun and create
a birthday card for Fountains Mall!

Weekends ONLY from
18 August to 21 October 2018
Book your spot at Slater's Toy Magic
Terms & Conditions apply

Categories
5 to 7 years / 8 to 10 years / 11 to 13 years

Winners will be announced on Friday, 26 October 2018



HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION & SHUTTLE SERVICE

AWESOME ADVENTURES

WE TRANSPORT YOU TO THE BEST ADVENTURE ACTIVITY IN J-BAY AND BEYOND.

LAND SEA Air

We are the REAL DEAL when it comes to Having Fun

Family Accommodation, Surf Cottage,

Home Apts Suite, Ocean View.

Richard Dickson

072 780 0134

Credentials of Richard Dickson, Senior safety officer | Bike license | Skippers license | PSP Driver Code 14 License | Public liability insurance



Damage to Beach, New bridge holds

St Francis Bay beach:

St Francis Bay's beach has suffered some damage during the recent rains and extremely high tides and rough sea.

The main areas affected are in front of public toilets at Main Beach and a section in front of Ralph Road. Both these areas are on public open space which is managed by the Kouga Municipality.

The St Francis Property Owners Association has held a site meeting with the municipality and is awaiting an action report.

Another concern is that a considerable amount of sand on the beaches at Main Beach, Ann Avenue and George Road has been lost - in places in excess on 1.5 metres.

The beach access stairs at Ann Avenue were also damaged and these have now been removed to prevent further damage. They will be replaced before the start of the end of the year holiday season.

Peter Road beach access stairs:

The SFP extends a big thank you to the

Pagden family for paying for the replacement of the paved area in front of the Peter Road beach access stairs. The rest of the beach including the spit appears not to have lost much sand which is good news!

An area of breaching did occur on the Spit but this was very close to the river mouth and therefore the canal system was not adversely affected. The entire Spit area is being monitored on a regular basis.

The Sand River Bridge and Roads:

Due to the heavy rains, a certain amount of scouring of the sand above the bridge has taken place. Other than that the surrounding area around the bridge has stood up well.

As normal after heavy rains, many potholes have begun to appear in our roads and the municipality has been conducting repairs as well as brushing the roads to remove accumulated silt and sand. This is necessary to prevent further damage to the roads.



Anne Avenue beach

New Sand River Bridge