

Msunduzi News

WE ARE THE CAPITAL



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Ghost workers in the Capital?



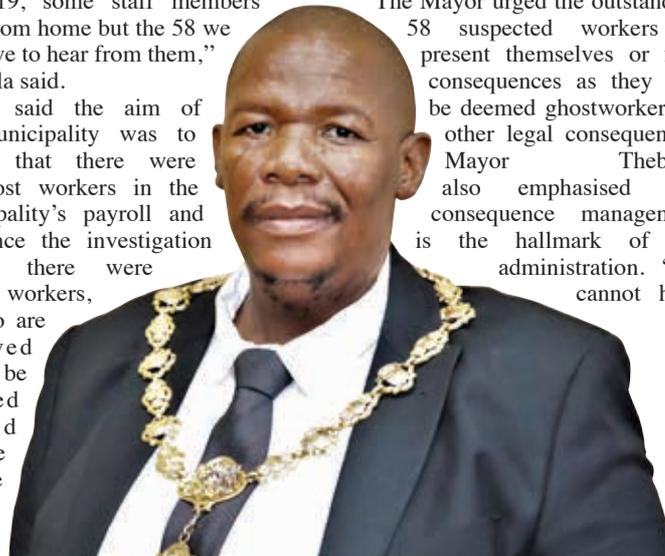
PROVINCIAL CAPTIAL: Msunduzi's City Hall (Picture: Facebook)

By Siyethaba Mhlongo

MSUNDUZI Mayor, Mzimkhulu Thebolla has clarified the issue of ghost workers in Msunduzi Municipality. The municipality has been in the news once more following the discovery of what has been described as ghost workers. Msunduzi Municipality has been under administration for two years as a result of its failure to provide essential services to its citizens in addition to its financial challenges. When reports of ghost workers surfaced there was an understandable uproar. The Mayor, has however explained the existence of ghost workers in the municipality. He said it had been discovered that there were

121 persons who were reported to be ghost workers in the municipality. "We had to stop the salaries of these people in order to determine whether there were no extra salary payments over and above the number of people registered in our payroll. When 121 people failed to present themselves, we stopped paying the salaries. So far 63 presented themselves and 58 are still outstanding," said the Mayor. He said this process would be followed by an investigation to establish if indeed all these were ghost workers or whether there were other reasons such people were in the municipality's payroll. He said the 63 provided the municipality with reasons why they were on the payroll and some of their reasons were acceptable. "Some of these were off sick.

Because we are in a period of Covid-19, some staff members work from home but the 58 we still have to hear from them," Thebolla said. He said the aim of the municipality was to ensure that there were no ghost workers in the municipality's payroll and that once the investigation reveals there were ghost workers, all who are involved will be charged and also be made to pay back



monies wrongfully paid to them. The Mayor urged the outstanding 58 suspected workers to present themselves or face consequences as they will be deemed ghostworkers or other legal consequences. Mayor Thebolla also emphasised that consequence management is the hallmark of his administration. "We cannot have

wrongdoers escaped unpunished while we pronounce that we are turning the municipality around," said Mayor Thebolla. The issue of the existence of the ghost workers could not have surfaced at a worse time for the municipality. Over and above the officially and legally putting the Municipality under administration, a few years ago, the Provincial Executive has had to set up a war room to assist the municipality to get back on its feet. One of the most important aspects of capacitation is human capital, with the requisite skills. Reports of ghost workers in the municipality cast doubt on the vacancy rate. The headcount exercise seems to be a step in the direction as strict financial controls are crucial to the sustainability of any municipality.

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Department supports Msunduzi

By **Siyethaba Mhlongo**

THE MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Siphon Hlumuka, recently visited Msunduzi to hear directly from the residents about the challenges they have been experiencing, especially with the billing.

When Hlumuka arrived there some of the residents were already waiting for him to share their grievances. They were representing some of the ratepayers and residents associations, including the Greater Edendale Residents Association (GERA) and the Woodlands Ratespayers Association (WRPA).

They complained about how the system that the Municipality is using and alleged that municipal workers no longer go out to read the meters so they just estimated. WRPA said it wanted to make contributions to the solutions that are being experienced with SAP.

Mr Gart Rampaul of WRPA said they want to play a supportive role to the Municipality but officials are being blocked from engaging with them. He said the officials said they cannot jump over the political gatekeeping and other red tape they have to go through if they need to go to communities.

"The residents are angry. We've spoken to the Mayor, the Municipal Manager Mr Khathide and the Administrator Mr Duma. We have 14 organisations who want to support this Municipality," said Rampaul.

City Manager, Mr Khathide explained what happened saying they had protocol issues because they had to involve the councillor.

"We agreed that we will send our officials there but the ward councillor said he was not properly consulted. We found ourselves caught in a political conflict that we



MEC Hlumuka visited Msunduzi to hear about community issues

(Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

wouldn't want to find ourselves in as an administration."

Hlumuka told the residents that they must follow the protocol and then go to the Office of the Mayor because the Mayor has an open door policy so that residents can go and talk to him and be part of the solution in the challenges that Msunduzi is facing.

"We shouldn't fight but we have to work with Government and that is why we are also here because Government is for the people. We are going to use some of the things contained in your reports to come up with the solution," said Hlumuka.

Hlumuka also emphasised on what Khathide said.

"It's important that people follow protocol especially political protocol because when there is political instability the work of the administration of the Municipality also gets affected. We have to ensure that councillors are involved in

everything that's happening so that they don't come back and fight with the officials tomorrow about why they have not responded to certain things."

Mrs Jeanette Molefe from the GERA brought a copy of a newspaper clipping from November 2011 where the then mayor, Chris Ndlela, said the Municipality had allocated R57,7million for the Greater Edendale area.

"We also find ourselves faced with large amounts that we owe the Municipality and we request the MEC's intervention because until now nothing has been done," said Mrs Molefe.

Hlumuka said what brought them to Msunduzi is outlined in Section 154 of the Constitution which says that they must support municipalities.

"The challenges, that have been raised in different platforms, that this Municipality is facing have to do with revenue collection because

of the residents who are not paying. When we speak to them they say it is because they don't agree with the amounts that are reflected on their statements. We assure you that there has been some improvement since the last time we engaged with the municipality," said Hlumuka.

He said another thing they came to assess was to see how municipal officials treat with the residents because if the latter are not treated well, they will not pay.

"As a Department our officials are supporting this Municipality, working with the Administrator since they are under the Section 139(b) intervention. The Administrator is here to ensure that whatever the Municipality does is within the legislation," he said.

He appealed to the residents to pay for municipal services saying if they do not the Municipality will not be able to continue rendering services to communities as well as ensuring that there is development.

It has been a year since the Municipality issued a statement stating that it had a challenges with the SAP system. The Municipality has not yet taken legal action against EOH, which is the company that was contracted to install the system and was paid for some of the work not done, since there were modules that were not installed.

When asked if the Municipality Mayor Mzimkhulu Thebolla will institute legal action against EOH, he said: "We have to because we must remember that this company signed an agreement. The incomplete work means they were in breach of that agreement because they did not provide what was agreed on and that is a contractual breach."

Msunduzi Call Centre to be upgraded

By **Siyethaba Mhlongo**

MAYOR Mzimkhulu Thebolla says he has heard the complaints from the residents on social media about the challenges they face when they phone Msunduzi's Call Centre. MEC Ravi Pillay, during his tenure as the MEC for Finance, also committed to be part of the solution as he is also the uMgungundlovu District Champion.

MEC said amongst the critical challenges affecting operations at the Call Centre are the chairs that are not in a satisfactory condition, especially since the staff work 12-hour shifts.

"The workers need proper chairs that don't have a negative impact on their health. In terms of the technology, the agents says the phones sometimes switch off. The municipality must commit to procuring good phones. It's important that the technology that they are using works properly so that it will be easy for them to do their jobs, which will also ease the communication between the departments that they refer the reports to," he said.

He added that he also found that there is also no properly planning in terms of how the staff works.

"We understand that the country is on lockdown because of Covid-19 as a result the number of people working has been reduced in order to be able to practise social distancing but a unit as critical as this one must have a proper way of working. I'm going to request



Mayor Mzimkhulu Thebolla and MEC Ravi Pillay

(Pictures: Siyethaba Mhlongo)



the manager of this unit to prepare a report with recommendations and we will decide on the way forward with the Mayor."

Mayor Thebolla said: "We have to upgrade our IT system. It cannot be right that we are a city this size, and also the capital of the province, but we are complaining about technology. We are going to attend to the matter of the call centre and we know that we have to start with the conduct of the staff because as we speak there are customers who now know the agents by names because of their improper conduct. We commit ourselves to urgently deal with this so that the staff can also feel like they are in a place of work."

He further added that the Municipality received a donation of tablets which he believes will assist in making the work of the call centre staff easier. The Manager for Communications and Intergovernmental Relations, Ms Thobeka Mafumbatha said: "We believe these tablets will go a long way in improving the quality of service provided by the municipality. We planned on training the supervisors who will then pass on the knowledge to the rest of the staff. This system will work like WhatsApp, where the community will be able to communicate with the Municipality."

Senior Manager in the Human Resources Department, Mrs Faith

Ndlovu said they are committed to resolving the challenges faced by the call centre.

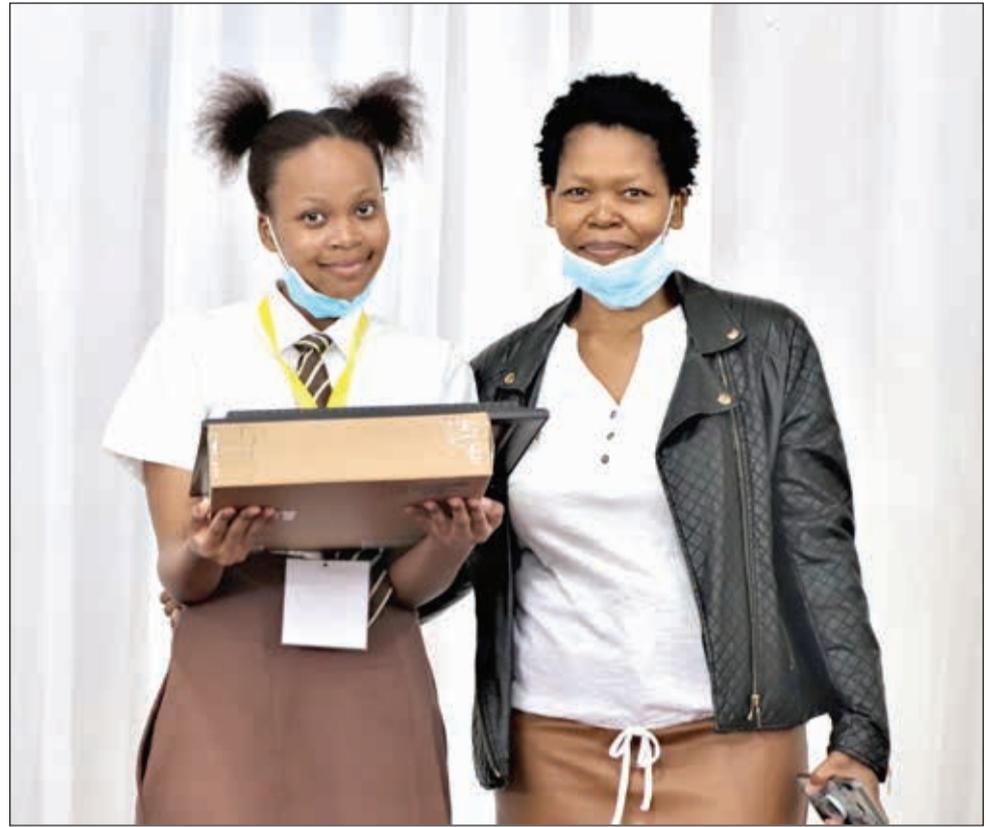
"It started with the complaints on the shift allowance, and we resolved that. What we encourage the staff to do is to continue doing their jobs and if they have grievances they must report those so that they can be addressed."

He said it is critical for the Municipality to improve the communication between the call centre and the supervisors in the departments that attend to the issues reported by the community.

"We are trying to come up with way for the people working on the field to communicate with the call centre because the lack of progress reports is what end up frustrating the residents when they don't get information about how long it is going to take to resolve the issue and also receive feedback on whether someone has responded to their reports."

In his concluding remarks, MEC Pillay said: "If we get reports of improper conduct of the staff, after we've resolved all the challenges raised, they will face disciplinary actions. We can't implement consequence management if we have not ensured that the working environment is conducive for people to do their jobs. We also have to satisfy ourselves that we've indeed played our role."

Msunduzi matric stars shine bright



Msunduzi Pride: Students who excelled in the 2020 matric exams (Pictures: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

By Siyethaba Mhlongo

MATRIC results for the class of 2020 have been released amid general consensus that this has been most difficult school calendar due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Msunduzi pupils represented Umgungundlovu well by featuring in the top 5. The best performer is Prayasta Haridas from Pietermaritzburg Girls High School, followed by Ahmad Bayat from Raisethorpe, the third best being Deepika Sirkar from Pietermaritzburg Girls High School. The 4th best performer is Ishalin Maharaj from Maritzburg College, followed by Andiswa Mzolo from Esiqongweni High School.

In the quintile 5 schools the best

performer, Prayasta Haridas, she was the best pupil in her school in 2020 in a function held in September. "It is not easy to comment about the school because we did not have face to face classes, we received instructions and school work online. The big challenge of learning under COVID-19 is being able to discipline myself and focussing on schoolwork during lockdown," said Prayasta.

She also said: "Even during the lockdown, I would wake up very early and motivate myself to focus on schoolwork, so that I can achieve my dreams and ambitions. She said she wishes to send the following message to matric pupils: "you must focus on your future plans, do not despair or criticise online learning, teachers and students who do not know how to use computers. You must grab the

bull by the horns because the future is unpredictable."

She said she will be doing mechatronics at Stellenbosch University. "This field combines mechanical engineering and electrical engineering. It involves the use of robots, the creation of things do not require human operation," she said.

She said as she attended a well-equipped school she would like to convey a message to pupils from less-equipped schools: "Each must find ways to make the best of the situation, asking for assistance which will help you to succeed."

The best performer from quintile 3 schools, Andiswa Mzolo from Esiqongweni said the year 2020 taught her resilience and independence. "I experience university life as I was learning independently, without

relying a lot on the teacher. I had to organise learning aids for myself. The main thing that I learnt is that perseverance pays off," she said.

She said the challenge in 2020 was being unsure whether the exams would be written, which caused a lot of uncertainty, confusion and despondency. "COVID changed learning methods, which included TV learning. Being the first group to learn in this manner, the next groups must know that there is no rest from the first day. I use to study the whole night. A matric pupil can only sleep in December after examinations. COVID has also taught pupils not to rely on teachers for their own education. They must organise their own learning material, which they can access through the internet free of charge because of COVID."

She said she wants to study medicine at Stellenbosch University. "I chose this field because my mother showed that she loves other people and has empathy. I want to show people love and empathy through medicine," she said.

She said the school organisation career education tours which motivated her to learn about medicine and learnt that this field is one of the most sought fields.

"We would like to thank government and parents for motivating us which is why we have obtained good results. They went a long way to provide material including the use of radio learning. We request families to support pupils although we know that you are not rich but data bundles are crucial," said Andiswa.

Msunduzi promotes diverse skills for youth

By Siyethaba Mhlongo

EXPERTS say the tourism industry has a potential to grow South Africa's economy. In this country tourism is amongst that sectors that employs more people when compared to agriculture, manufacturing of cars, development of chemicals and mining. Approximately 1 500 000 people work in the tourism sector, including Msunduzi.

The Chairperson for the Youth Committee in Msunduzi, Councillor Ntuthuko Ntshangase, who is also a member of the Executive Committee, hosted a send-off ceremony for bartending students before they left for the different companies where they are going to be trained how to mix mouth-watering drinks. The training for these students is facilitated by Msunduzi's Youth Office.

Before their departure, Councillor Ntshangase, appealed to them to conduct themselves properly where they are going saying they are now the mirror of Msunduzi to the institutions that will be training them. "The tourism industry needs you and what really makes us happy as that you are going into something different. Here in South Africa we are told that we don't have chefs but it's not that we don't have people who have cooking skills but they just don't have the qualifications so we end up importing



Msunduzi youth chairperson Councillor Ntuthuko Ntshangase escorts Msunduzi-assisted students to various training facilities (Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

people from other country, so we are happy that you are filling the other gap that we had in this industry," said Ntshangase.

Talking about what it meant to him to send young people from Msunduzi to be trained in such a scarce skill, he said: "This restores hope in the people of Msunduzi because they can see that they have a Municipality that cares for its youth. This also opens other windows of opportunity for the sharing of knowledge."

He said it is their wish for all young people to be exposed to different

opportunities at the same time but there have a challenge of resources so the programmes will be rolled out in phases. "Initiatives like this help the youth get into diverse sectors that they would not ordinarily be exposed to. We hope this will also encourage our youth to up their game and also start thinking out of the box when it comes to careers they would like to pursue. They must go into sectors where they are plenty of job opportunities," he said.

Manager for the Youth Centre, Mrs Sbongile Mchunu, also gave

a farewell message to the students. "Please remember that we still have a threat of Covid-19 hanging over our heads so you must always wear your mask because you will be working with people. Please conduct yourselves with respect and professionalism so that those institutions can also consider you if they have job opportunities. We know that some of you want to be self-employed but some will be hired by establishments. "If you go out there and misbehave, that will come back to the Municipality. You (students) are the fourth group that we are sending

off and we've never had any problems from the previous. If you misbehave just remember that you are ruining things for those who are coming after you who also wish to benefit from this programme."

Miss Hlengiwe Khwela from Tourism World, who is the programme co-ordinator, said that her boss recently said that it is not that young people do not have the skills but they are not employable. "Young people are getting qualifications but they don't get the space to showcase what they studied so this initiative is aimed at doing just that. When you try and apply for a job after graduating you are told that they need at least two years of experience and where are you going to get that from? As a result you end up not getting that job."

She went on to add that Tourism World will train them then get companies that will help the students get experience, whether they get hired after, that will be up to those companies. She said amongst the things that they will look at is how each student conducts themselves and also whether that company has the money to employ them.

"We are committed to working with the Municipality to empower the youth because our work is depended on how the Municipality is operating and if it is able to recruit young people," she said.

Msunduzi improving ageing infrastructure

By Luvuyo Thahla

THE Umsunduzi Municipality is continuing with efforts to upgrade its ageing infrastructure, which includes electricity, water provision and the roads.

The municipality says, with regards to electricity, the problem is not only outdated infrastructure that contributes to continuous outages. The problem is made worse by illegal connections, faulty substations and the ever increasing number of people who are moving into the municipality area.

The Msunduzi Mayor, Cllr Thebolla Mzimkhulu has outlined some of the interventions his Municipality is implementing to reverse years of service delivery weaknesses in the district, which include mainly water reticulation, electricity supply and the road network.

“This is evident in prolonged and increasingly more frequent power outages, interruptions and increasing risk to water supply and poor conditions of our road infrastructure resulting in an increasing number of hazardous potholes”, the Mayor says.

Cllr. Mzimkhulu says, in order to effectively address these challenges, the Municipality will enhance communication with communities, business and social partners in order to improve service delivery.

In all these efforts, the city will be guided by the IDP as a tool to ensuring that priority areas such as water provision, electricity and road infrastructure are effectively addressed in the short and long term.

With regards to electricity, he says some of the interventions the Municipality has implemented include repairs and maintenance of substations, cables and overhead network including clearing servitudes. Illegal connections are also being removed while security guards are deployed to hotspot areas. There is also sourcing of funding and upgrading of infrastructure in partnership with Eskom. This



Monde Bala from Eskom (Picture: Twitter)

will include the electrification of informal settlements, the Mayor says.

On road infrastructure improvement, Cllr. Mzimkhulu says a company had been appointed to repair potholes but that these efforts were being hampered by recent heavy rains. He says the municipality is also looking into resurfacing high volume arterial roads.

The Mayor is being supported by officials from Eskom and the municipality in what he says.

Eskom Executive Director of Distribution Mr Monde Bala (in the photo), recently visited Msunduzi to ascertain how the entity could assist the municipality in addressing the problem of adequate electricity supply to the residents of the municipality. Bala is from Eskom Headquarters in Gauteng and was assigned to engage the municipality in order to find solutions.

Eskom and Umsunduzi officials discussed ways in which the two could partner in order to find lasting

solutions in the supply of electricity in the municipality.

Acting Infrastructure Director for Umsunduzi, Mr uBrendon Sivpassard adds: “There was intervention by the Sukuma Sakhe Champion, Ravi Pillay following a resolution passed at a recent War Room meeting who said we must get a senior Eskom official to come down and assist with the electricity problem. The intention is to partner with Eskom. The Eskom official came with his team which included

experts in the field”, say Sivpassard.

Bala said the partnership with the municipality follows a meeting which was held with Public Enterprise Minister Pravin Gordhan together with Eskom CEO Mr Andre de Ruyter where it was agreed to look into electricity problems in Umsunduzi.

“We shall do all in our power to bring the electricity problem in Msunduzi under control so that the economy in the area is not adversely affected”, Bala said.

Msunduzi develops Greater Edendale

By Siyethaba Mhlongo

THE conditions in previously disadvantaged areas are worlds apart from conditions in areas that were favoured with development under apartheid. Edendale has been selected to benefit from a national government programme to improve underdeveloped areas.

Msunduzi News spoke to Narain Singh, from the Greater Vulindlela Development Initiative about plans to develop Edendale, with the help of National Treasury.

Singh said there are many procedures that have to be undergone before the work starts. “This includes paperwork that must be submitted. Some stages have been completed. We are now constructing a network of access roads.

“The aim is to establish an economic hub and to develop the area. This is done through existing establishments like the two malls two hospitals, a shoe-making factory, a police station and a university. These are important to the sustainability of the city”, he said.

He also said: “We have now applied to the Department of Transport for permission to use our existing system of traffic management. We have also planned for water reticulation, and human settlement, as there are houses around these establishments”.

He said the “city” will be an 800m radius, which means you can walk it in 10 minutes. “This small “city” is intended to benefit people who do not have cars and to improve the lot of small businesspeople like the

hawkers who are currently scattered all over. This programme will have trading in a concentrated area, and they can benefit from government after the introduction of big shops and malls into the area”, he said.

He said this project will be divided into various phases. The first phase will be the construction of access roads, with the second phase being the construction of a small business hub, a pedestrian bridge over Selby Msimang road, which is under construction under the auspices of the PTN and the construction of a public square. “We are ready to confidently inform the public that the project is underway, with the second billed to cost R250m”, he said.

Singh said National Treasury does not easily commit huge funds without being satisfied about the

viability of the proposal and the benefit to the people. On the two malls he said: “these malls were constructed in the area because of good traffic. After assessment we decided to add to existing development, which will further support the malls.

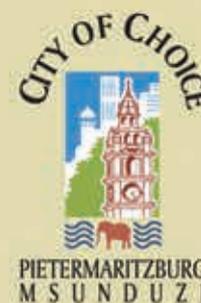
He said Msunduzi was the first to approach Government on how to manage the area, including vegetation maintenance, general maintenance, proposed partnerships and financial sustainability.

Singh said the outcome will be human settlements, a clean township and slum clearance. “We have also installed information communication and technology hub which will involve all government departments. The City Manager has written to all government and certain municipal

departments to take up space, which means we are bringing government to the people”, said Singh.

He said the other reason for this “city” are the eradication of unbalanced development of areas. He said they intend to close the gap between the poor and the affluent areas. “We are just dealing with the hurdle of purchasing land from a private owner since we can’t build on land we do not own.

Singh said the aim is to improve the lot of the people of Edendale, and to eliminate the need to flock into the city centre. “This town is not competition to the city but rather an attempt to bring services and goods closer to the people of Edendale since the cost of living has increased. The return taxi fare to the city is now R30, which can be handy if saved”.



— FROM THE DESK OF —
THE MAYOR

LIKE many parts of the country Msunduzi encountered a lot in 2020. The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, whose first South African case was discovered in one of the residents of uMgungundlovu District which we are also part of its family of local municipalities, placed an added spotlight and pressure on us. However it did not end there as the rapid increase in the number of those testing positive and negligence by some of the residents led to both the provincial and national Government declaring Msunduzi as a hotspot and called for people to change their behavior.

The statistics that were released by different organisations about the impact of Covid-19 identified Msunduzi as one of the areas that were hardest hit. As a result some of Msunduzi's residents lost their jobs, profits and some families found themselves even struggling to put food on the table. These are just a few of the visible scars that were left by the the coronavirus on the community of Msunduzi.

We would not have been able to come this far if it were not for the different campaigns that were led by the Municipality, other structures of Government as well as the non-governmental organisations. The deep cleaning of the rank was led by Mayor Thebolla, the construction of the emergency field hospital for Covid-19 patients and the awareness campaigns that were accompanied by the distribution of sanitisers and masks to curb the spread of the virus. The recent announcement that we are now in a second wave which is reportably more dangerous than the first, however, now requires Msunduzi to review its plans to tackle this new challenge head on.

Service delivery shortcomings

Besides the coronavirus outbreak, the Municipality also had its own challenges. Some of them were historical when there was the leadership of that period at the helm, both politically and administratively. There were also new issues. The cleanliness of the central business

district, which is not just for the people of Msunduzi but a capital City of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, is an issue of concern. As it should some of the criticism should be directed to the leadership and the workers but some of it should also be on the residents because the waste that is out there is as a result of people dumping their refuse where they should not and littering.

Despite the numerous campaigns, some which were led by the Municipality and others by residents as well as organisations, this problem still persists. What has become clear is that - even when more funds are invested in waste management, additional staff to collect waste is provided and other measures are implemented with the aim to resolve this - the situation will not change until the perpetrators of illegal dumping and littering change their behaviour.

The fires that erupt at the landfill site continue to be a thorn on the side of the Municipality. This has been subject to many discussions and reports. The fires at the site don't just disrupt people's lives but they

also infringe on their human right to live in a pollution-free environment as outlined in the Constitution of the country. The Municipality could also be at risk of losing its landfill management license if the issue of the fires is not resolved. This must be done with urgency because it impacts on people's basic human rights as per the Constitution.

Financial status

The Msunduzi Local Municipality has been faced with financial constraints for quite some time. As documented in various reports the situation was as result of numerous issues; starting from the mismanagement of the finances and the challenge of the non-payment for municipal services by residents some of which was at times due to the economic situation. The reality is that municipalities are sustained through the revenue they collect from their residents and if they don't collect enough that has a negative impact on various things, including their ability to delivery even the basic and critical services to the people.

As a result of the situation faced by the Msunduzi it, therefore, came as no surprise when the City Manager tabled a report recommending to Council to declare a state of local disaster. Under normal circumstances Mr Khathide's recommendation would not be viewed as a positive thing but Msunduzi's current situation is anything but normal. On top of everything that is happening, both the Msunduzi's political and administrative leadership is working day and night to find a sustainable solution. They are not doing this alone as the provincial Government has also come on board to support the capital City.

The challenge to both the Municipality and its citizens is to come up with a collaborative plan where they can work together towards a common goal with the aim of getting out of this situation. This will happen if all the stakeholders trust each other and stop expecting that an outsider is going to come and rescue the City. They must know that any sustainable solution to Msunduzi's challenges has come from them.

MSUNDUZI TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

THE PIETERMARITZBURG CITY HALL



Pietermaritzburg's City Hall, which claims to be the largest brick building in the southern hemisphere, lies in the middle of the Pietermaritzburg city centre. The building is a national monument and is a beautiful piece of Victorian architecture, with its 47m high bell tower. Constructed in 1893, Pietermaritzburg's City Hall was ravaged by fire in 1895, with reconstruction taking place some six years later

On entering the hall, you see a massive pipe organ, which is the largest south of the equator. Just outside the Pietermaritzburg City Hall stands a 5.5kg naval gun-known as the One O'Clock Gun, for the obvious reason that it used to fire every day at exactly one o'clock, with the exception of Sundays.

NATIONAL MONUMENT

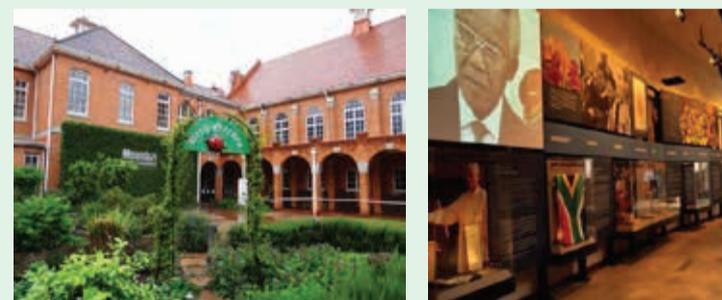


The gun's history is rich, starting with its journey during the 1840s on the HMS Fawn. The ship carried out the worthy cause of capturing slave ships and releasing their human cargo, ultimately putting an end to the slave trade.

Contact details:

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Phone: 033 392 3000

VOORTREKKER/MSUNDUZI MUSEUM



Voortrekkers is Afrikaans/Dutch for pioneers but literally means 'those who trek ahead'. The Great Trek (Die Groot Trek) refers to a number of mass movements of these five groups of local Afrikaans pioneers who, disenchanted with the then British rule of the Cape Colony, migrated to the inland of South Africa by ox wagon from 1835 founding the 'Republia of Natalia' at Pietermaritzburg in 1839.

The museum was created in 1912 as a tribute to the Voortrekkers. Voortrekker history is the main focus in the Voortrekker Complex, i.e. the historic Church of the Vow, the Andries Pretorius House and the E.G. Jansen Extension.

Contact details:

Address: 351 Langelibalele St, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Open 8:00, Closes 16:00, Phone: 033 394 6834

KWAZULU-NATAL MUSEUM



Contact details:
237 Jabu Ndlovu St,
Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Mon to Fri 08:15 to 16:30,
Saturday 09:00 to 16:00
Sunday open from 10:00
to 15:00
Phone: 033 345 1404

Pietermaritzburg's City Hall, which claims to be the largest brick building in the southern hemisphere, lies in the middle of the Pietermaritzburg city centre. The building is a national monument and is a beautiful piece of Victorian architecture, with its 47m high bell tower. Constructed in 1893, Pietermaritzburg's City Hall was ravaged by fire in 1895, with reconstruction taking place some six years later.

On entering the hall, you see a massive pipe organ, which is the largest south of the equator. Just outside the Pietermaritzburg City Hall stands a 5.5kg naval gun-known as the One O'Clock Gun, for the obvious reason that it used to fire every day at exactly one o'clock, with the exception of Sundays.

TATHAM ART GALLERY



Contact details:
Tatham Art Gallery
P.O. Box 321
Pietermaritzburg 3200
South Africa
Tel: +27 33 392 2812
Fax: +27 33 394 9831
www.tatham.org.za

The Tatham Art Gallery, one of the major art museums in South Africa, dates back to 1903. Situated in Pietermaritzburg, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal, the Tatham Art Gallery serves the Msunduzi region through the Visual Arts.

The Tatham Art Gallery hosts a range of Art Exhibitions. These include travelling and researched exhibitions as well as exhibitions initiated by the Gallery based on art works in the permanent collection.

A major function of the Tatham Art Gallery is to display art. This is accomplished through the organizing and hosting of temporary exhibitions and ongoing changes in the permanent display areas.

PMB BOTANIC GARDEN



Contact details:
Mayor's Walk,
Pietermaritzburg, 3201,
Natal Midlands, KwaZulu
Natal.
7 days a week
08h00 to 17h30
Tel: +27 (0)33 344-3585

The city is not known as the City of Flowers for nothing, and private gardens and public parks in Pietermaritzburg are filled with lush vegetation and seasonal blooms, particularly bougainvillea's that thrive in the intense heat of this part of the world. It is fitting that one of the most beautiful national gardens resides in its heart. The Pietermaritzburg Botanical gardens were established in the early 1870s and essentially focus on conservation and propagation of rare and endangered indigenous plants, and the cultivation of east coast grasslands.

There is also a muti garden of indigenous medicinal plants, displayed around a traditional Zulu hut, a series of lovely walking trails through grassland and indigenous forest, and a popular guided walk programme. Picnic, weddings and events allowed.

GOLDEN HORSE CASINO



Contact details:
Address: 45 New
England Rd, Scottsville,
Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Open 8:00am to
11:45PM
Tel: 033 395 8000

Golden Horse is one of the Tsogo Sun Gaming Casinos situated in Pietermaritzburg in Scottsville. A lively casino offering an extensive scope of entertainment. It hosts many shows and events and is one of the two casinos in the world that is situated on a racecourse.

There are 450 slot machines, 20 tables and the Rosewood Room is available to top players. A variety of dining options are available such as Rockafella's – a Grande Buffet and Restaurant. The White Horse Function Room, located along the racecourse can accommodate up to 120 guests and is the ideal venue for any occasion. There are excellent accommodation establishments nearby, such as the luxurious Golden Horse Hotel.

SCOTTSVILLE RACE COURSE



Contact details:
Address: 45 New
England Rd,
Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg
3201
Tel: 033 395 8000

Hollywood bets Scottsville Racecourse is situated in Pietermaritzburg, the Capital of KwaZulu-Natal and is a pleasant, scenic and easy 50-minute drive from Durban. The track is right handed, oval shaped, and approximately 2300-metres in circumference with a banked turn allowing easy transition into the home straight with a 550-metre run in. Hollywood bets Scottsville also has a 1200-metre straight course. A moveable rail allows for an interchangeable home stretch for races longer than 1200-metres.

Hollywood bets Scottsville's modern facilities incorporate all the very best in racecourse comfort, elegance and intimacy, and patrons are offered a wide choice of restaurants and bars in which to enjoy top class racing.

COMRADES MARATHON HOUSE



Contact details:
18 Connaught Rd Scottsville,
Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa 3201
Open Monday to Friday
Time 8:00-16:30
Tel: 033 897 8650
Email: info@comrades.com

An old restored Victorian house holds the history and memorabilia of an old race that is the ultimate human race. Comrades Marathon House serves as the headquarters for the Comrades Marathon and a museum to the history of the race and its victors.

Historical museum photographs document the beginning of this global gathering initiated in 1921 by World War 1 veteran Vic Clapham as a tribute race to the South African soldiers who died in the Great War (1914-1918).

The camaraderie of this approximately 90 km proudly South African marathon event is electric serving to unite all South Africans be they televised viewers, stadium spectators or race participants.

ALEXANDRA PARK



Contact details:
Pelham,
Pietermaritzburg
Open 24hrs
Support services office;
7:30 – 16:30
(033 392 3510)

Alexandra Park is one of the green belts, which contribute to Pietermaritzburg's reputation as "The Garden City". The park was established in 1863 and is named after Queen Alexandra, wife of Edward VII.

The Alexandra Park is the hive of many activities which include cycling, jogging. During summer, the park is utilized as a haven for friends and family as a picnic area. The park has a small section reserved as a play area for kids.

The Alexandra Park is 85 hectares and bounded by the Msunduzi River, along which the famous canoe marathon runs; it is also a start point of many different races that take place in the city.

BISLEY VALLEY NATURE RESERVE



Contact details:
411 Boom Street
Pietermaritzburg 3201
Chris Metherell
Tel: (033) 392 3242/1
Fax: (033) 342 7107
Chris.metherell@
msunduzi.gov.za

Bisley Valley Nature Reserve is situated on the western side of Pietermaritzburg on Murray Road going toward Mkondeni and is not known at all even to locals! The Bisley Valley reserve is 350 hectares of thornveld and grassland perfect for those who want to enjoy their space in nature close to home.

Things to do

There are a variety of habitats including grassland, open and closed woodland, and thicket. It is an easy area to walk, and contains excellent bushveld birds, plus giraffe, impala and zebra. There is a nice picnic site with braai grids supplied. Entrance is free.

QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK



Contact details:
1 Peter Brown Dr,
Town Bush Valley,
Pietermaritzburg,
3202
Open 08:00 to 4:30
Tel: 033 845 1000

Situated in Hilton on the northern slopes of Pietermaritzburg, the nature reserve is home to many beautiful species, including impala, blesbok, zebra, bushbuck, daisies, grey and blue duiker and crowned eagles.

The park not only offers views of all these aforementioned wild animals, it also contains numerous indigenous and exotic plants. Several cycad and endangered species.

Visitors are welcome to make use of three picnic areas with braai and ablution facilities. A small resource centre that offers regular environmental education workshops throughout the year.

PIETERMARITZBURG STATION



Contact details:
Pietermaritzburg
Railway Station,
Railway Street,
Pietermaritzburg,
3201
Open 7 days a week.

Pietermaritzburg Railway Station is the main railway station serving the city of Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. It is located on Railway and Pine Streets in the South Western corner of the city centre. The station is a stop on long-distance passenger rail services operated by Shosholozha Meyl.

It travels between Durban (KwaZulu-Natal), Cape Town (Western Cape) and Johannesburg (Gauteng). This station is serviced by the Shosholozha Meyl, which is part of the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa and transports around 4 million long-distance passengers around the country every year. The station building demonstrates a classic Victorian look and feel, which is only exaggerated by the beautiful red bricks and somewhat ornate finishing's.

MANAYE HALL



Contact details:
1048 Mhlonhlo
Rd, Edendale Cc,
Pietermaritzburg,
3217

The Manaye Hall in Imbali is a monumental landmark as a venue for the All-In-Africa Conference that was organized on the 25 of March 1961. It is in the Manaye Hall where Madiba addressed the gathering and made a call for the philosophy of "One Man, One Vote" which is now enjoyed by many generations. Madiba also gave life to the mantra "Amandla" which loosely translates to "Power to the People".

The Manaye Hall was offered by the Indian community to the ANC for its All-in-Africa conference in 1961 and marks a unification of two races to bring change. This is where history is commemorated every year through the Mandela Day Marathon. The Historic Manaye Hall (Arya Samaj) is set to be turned into a Museum and Heritage Site, in the hopes of attracting tourists!

THE OLD PRISON



Contact details:
4 Burger Street
Pietermaritzburg 3201
Tel: 033 845 0400
Monday to Friday:
8am to 4pm
Saturday: 9am to 1pm
Sunday: 10am to 2pm

Old Prison dates back to the Voortrekker times with more than 150 years of history including the Colonial times, Apartheid, Liberation struggle, Political struggle and ultimately to the dawn of democratic South Africa in 1994. This site was commissioned in 1862, with the monument block being the first building built on the site. Other buildings were built thereafter which include the gallows, whites only section, hospital, gibbet, etc. Many freedom fighters were kept in the prison during the struggles in South Africa. The Old Prison was a medium security institution. The prison has housed internationally and nationally known people that are our legends and heroes and have made a great impact on our lives today.

Entrance Charges: Adults: 20, Pensioners: R10, Children: R5

Landfill site solution in sight



England Landfill Site is plagued by a number of problems. (Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

By Siyethaba Mhlongo

FOR quite some time, the landfill site in Pietermaritzburg has been in the news because of fires that have broken out, engulfing the city with smoke and fumes.

Msunduzi News spoke to a senior official in Msunduzi Municipality, Wilson Mhlongo (pictured), about the strategies to deal with this problem.

Mhlongo showed that the municipality is currently able to comply with licence stipulations.

This includes daily operations.

“The Municipality has attended to Section 4.1.1, issued in terms of Section 31 of Act 107 of 1998 which deals with requirements of a landfill site. This notice had been issued because of Msunduzi Municipality’s failure to comply with legal requirements”, said Mhlongo.

Explaining the lifespan of the landfill site, he said: “Lifespans of landfill sites depend on various factors, which is why we can only estimate, 3 years have been spoken, then it changed to 6 years. The latest was 10 years. We should remember that there was fire outbreak in July last year, which means a reduction of

waste volume at the site. Although we do not encourage that, the reality is that it extended the life of the site”, he said.

He also said the licence the Municipality holds has 10 years to expiry.

“In 2027 if there will still be space, we’ll ask for an extension of the licence, the converse will be the case, then we’ll revert to what we have started, which is to look for an alternative site. We are currently seeking an expert to handle process, in partnership with our

staff”, said Mhlongo.

He also said 2021 is the year in which a decision must be taken about the new site because the Municipality can’t start looking in 2027. “We are going to issue a tender. The Municipality is still seeking funds, and after that there will be a long process of ensuring the suitability of the land”, he said.

He said the Municipality will use its own funds but also needs support hence applications have been submitted to various sources.

“We are awaiting the outcome of our applications. These funds will assist with the feasibility study, looking at the type of land or site, the type of waste to be handled and the purchase of the land, which is not close to residential areas.

Mhlongo said a committee has been established to handle issues related to the landfill site, which is one of the licence conditions. He said the committee comprises different stakeholders, especially those who are affected by the existence of the site, and the Department of Environment Affairs which monitors compliance by the Municipality.



PLACE NAMES

Changing of place names has begun

By Siyethaba Mhlongo

THE Chairperson of the Streets and Places Naming Committee, Councillor Vusi Ntshangase, said the process to formally name some of the places and streets around Msunduzi has started. “The aim is rejuvenate our City and get it on the right track now rather than later. The name of the place should be like a mirror of where we come from and also speak to the current generation. That is why we are ensuring that the formal naming of places is part of this campaign,” he said.

He said the initiative will be done in three phases but for now they are starting with the naming of places in wards 1, 2,3,4,5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22 and 23.

“We are going to give residents and opportunity to propose the names that they want their areas to be called. For example the name Imbali is not a formal name of that area as a result it falls under Edendale, so it’s up to the residents to decide whether they want that to continue. The same can be said about France and Thornville which are currently falling under Ambleton.

This programme will not just focus on the previously disadvantaged areas but it will go across the City to ensure that residents know the history behind the names of the areas they live in.”

He said the renaming of the roads that already have formal names

is not going to be as easy as the naming and formalising new streets because residents must submit a very convincing reason on why they want the existing names to be changed.

Ntshangase said the initiative will also include naming the parks, community halls and sports fields in different communities.

He said residents can propose names of prominent people who have contributed to the growth and development of Pietermaritzburg as well as the names of flowers, rivers or any other natural features that they want their streets or facilities to be named after.

“This year uBaba Harry Gwala would be celebrating 100 years if he was still alive so Msunduzi is commemorating that. There are also many other prominent leaders that come from here like Dr Joshua Radebe, Shakes Cele and Michael ‘Bhiza’ Dlamini. Bhiza was a famous soccer player who played for Kaizer Chiefs back in the day. We also had Joe Ngidi who was a well-known and respected boxer,” he said.

He said having proper street names will fast track the delivery of services to communities because properties will now have physical addresses.

“The municipality is owed more than R4billion by households and many of them are willing to pay for municipal services but we cannot send them statements because they



Mr Siwelile Zimu (Picture: Nokuthula Khanyile)

don’t have addresses,” he said.

He said this initiative will not only assist the municipality collect R900 million that is owed by residents and businesses but it will also help in the monthly revenue collection.

“Most of the households in Edendale and Imbali had post boxes but those have since been vandalised. As we speak there are people who cannot have their purchases delivered to their homes because they don’t have addresses, we are therefore trying to bridge that gap where we have people feeling like this City is divided two different worlds,” said Cllr Ntshangase.

Integrated Development Plan

(IDP) Manager, Mr uSiwelile Zimu said: “We are going to place copies of maps at the City Hall, the library and the offices of councillors. The roads that are affected will be clearly marked on those maps. You don’t need to belong to a certain organisation to put forward a proposal you just need to be a resident in Msunduzi.”

Zimu said the naming of streets and public facilities will cost the municipality R2million and that includes the erection of the signs. He said after the streets were named, each household will be given a number so that they can have a formal address.

“The aim is to collect the R900million that owed to the

municipality. We have a challenge of the post office returning the statements that we are mailing to customers because there are no addresses. This initiative is also part of the Municipality’s revenue enhancement strategy. “We are also responding to the residents’ complaints that they cannot shop online because they don’t have addresses where their goods can be delivered to,” said Zimu.

Electoral Commission’s (IEC) Gugu Memela welcomed the initiative of formalising the streets names saying it is going to help strengthened the accuracy of the voters roll. “Out of 346 540 homes in Msunduzi only 20% have formal street addresses.”

She said the IEC was previously taken to court because the voters roll did not have credible street addresses as some voters had to use descriptions since there were no physical addresses where they lived. She said this led to some of the voters casting their votes in the incorrect wards because the description could not be used as a demarcation the same way that the street could.

The proposals for new names for the streets or public spaces as well as renaming can be emailed to streetnaming@msunduzi.gov.za or call 033 392 2387. Submissions can also be made to the relevant ward councillor’s offices before the January 8 deadline. The proposed names will then be published for public comment for a period of 30 days.

Municipality continues fight against abuse

By Siyethaba Mhlongo

Msunduzi Municipality's commitment to the fight for human rights continues. This has been borne out by various campaigns including the fight against abuse of women and children which was led by Mgungundlovu District Champion, MEC Ravi Pillay. Addressing the march against the abuse of women and children, MEC Pillay said: "As Provincial Government we are joining the rest of the world to ensure that we also add our voice to this international campaign. Premier Sihle Zikalala has directed us to kick off the campaign where we are deployed as district champions."

He said he decided to participate in the activities in the province's capital City. He said Pietermaritzburg is amongst the cities with the high rate of gender-based violence incidents in KwaZulu-Natal.

"Plessislaer police station is leading with the number of cases related to gender-based violence in the province," he said.

He added that he was pleased to see that there are several community initiatives that deal directly with the issues of gender-based violence.

"This makes us happy because we have to work together with these community organisations to combat the abuse of women and children since they have first-hand information on what is happening in the communities that work within," said Pillay.

MEC Pillay said programmes aimed at empowering women economically are done through collaborations between the business sector and government.

He said they strongly believe that if they can uplift women and empower them economically it will



MEC Ravi Pillay and Mayor Mzimkhulu Thebolla lead a march to promote human rights (Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

result in a decrease in the number of cases of abuse because they will leave the abusive relationships where some are trapped because of they are financially-dependent on their abusers.

"We saw an increase in the abuse of women during the national lockdown, where some were physically assaulted, verbally abused, raped and even abused financially where they needed food so that they could live," he said.

He further said: "With the programmes we have the aim is to economically empower women.

We are doing this because during the apartheid era, women were discriminated in three ways. They were discriminated against based on their race, gender and even class."

He concluded by saying that all South African citizens must play a role in protecting women and children.

"We would like to encourage those who are in the forefront, such as police office and nurses, to play an even bigger role in the protection of victims and prosecution of the perpetrators."

Msunduzi Mayor, Councillor

Mzimkhulu Thebolla said: "Today we are commemorating the 22nd anniversary since this campaign of fighting against the abuse of women and children was launched. Here in Msunduzi we've also witnessed incidents of abuse of women and children and as the leadership we are going to support the initiatives that are geared towards fighting this scourge."

Mayor Mzimkhulu Thebolla further said: "We are not proud that Msunduzi is listed amongst the top 10 cities with high incidents of the abuse of women, which has made

us number 3 in the province. It also doesn't please us that the first that comes to mind when people think about Sweetwaters is the abuse of women."

Mayor Thebolla concluded his address by adding that Msunduzi will be taking its awareness campaign to the rural areas as the statistics indicate that the rate of gender-based violence is on the increase in the outskirts. He said they will be working with the traditional leadership, including izinduna and amabutho on this initiative.

HEALTH

Covid-19: KwaMafunze receives PPEs

By Siyethaba Mhlongo

MEC Ravi Pillay, during his tenure at the Provincial Treasury, handed over Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) to the KwaMafunze community which is under the leadership of Inkosi Maviyo Ngcobo. The area of KwaMafunze is made up of 16 villages in the Elandskop area. Its Traditional Council has 120 members and 16 izinduna.

Commenting on how the area got the donation of the PPE, Inkosi Ngcobo said: "The members of the Council approached one of the officials from the Provincial Treasury who lives in the area. They asked that official to go to the MEC on behalf of the community and request a donation of PPE because as the area of KwaMafunze we didn't get them even though this area is amongst those that are reported to have high numbers of Covid-19 infections."

He said they resolved to make a request for PPE because they had been witnessing a lot of social events in the area since the country moved to level 1 of the national lockdown and the Council did not want to see those gatherings turning into super-spreaders of the virus.

"We are going to use these PPEs when there are funerals or when people have traditional

events where they slaughter cattle because community members attend those gatherings. It will be the responsibility of each Induna to ensure that their communities are protected now that Government has assisted us with the PPE," said Inkosi Ngcobo.

MEC Pillay was accompanied by Msunduzi Mayor Cllr Mzimkhulu Thebolla and the councillor of the ward who both welcomed the donation. MEC Pillay was also there as the uMgungundlovu District Champion.

Inkosi Ngcobo then asked the members of his Council to brief the government leaders on other challenges the area of KwaMafunze faced.

MEC Pillay extended his gratitude to Inkosi Ngcobo for his warm welcome and highlighted the stability in the area under its traditional leadership as well as the dignified manner in which they handled matters.

"The manner in which you are managing matters here makes your relations with the Government even more important to us," said Pillay.

He then addressed the Council on how the Provincial Treasury works saying their responsibility is to ensure that government funds are used properly.



Mayor Thebolla and MEC Pillay presenting PPE donation

(Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

"We don't do much in terms of directly delivering services to the people. I would like the Council to know that it is your responsibility to protect the Government infrastructure that is in your communities," he said.

Pillay also urged members of the public to stay vigilant on Covid-19 saying that the threat of a second wave of infections remained real. "The fight is not over, we are coming to December where we want to relax and have

parties. There will also be visitors coming down and we need tourists to boost our economy. But we must recognize that the virus moves when people move. We have to show serious discipline and continue wearing our masks, observing social distancing and if somebody is sick we must take the necessary precautions," he said.

He commended the Council for having the foresight to make a request for the donation of PPE saying it showed that they care for

their communities.

Pillay also spoke to the Council about the economy saying Premier Sihle Zikalala was working hard to grow the economy of the province. He said the Premier would soon brief the province about the programmes that were planned to support those who are participating in the stimulation of the economy.

"The Government cannot give the R350,00 grant indefinitely so we have to find ways to grow out economy," said Pillay.

He said when he arrived in KwaMafunze he saw that they were not participating in the economy and encouraged them to explore opportunities in various sectors especially in agriculture which remains one of the key sectors of the economy.

"In an area like this a company like Toyota will not come and invest in building a manufacturing plant here but you can farm and sell your produce to supermarkets. We know you also have cattle so you can be cattle farmers and sell some of it to make money," he said.

He concluded by saying that he wanted to see KwaZulu-Natal attracting investors. "What we're seeing in Mooi River, where they are torching trucks, is really not good in the eyes of the investors."