



NEWSLETTER

The latest news and updates from the White River Ratepayers, The Power Of 8000 & Community Policing Forum



WELCOME TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

We are grateful for you joining our team and we look forward to working with the town to get White River looking it's best.

I think you will all agree that things are heating up and what is great is that the town is the beneficiary. Have you noticed the new rubbish bins organized by the FF appearing around the town? Nine are in place and a further 16 are expected. What we have to be sure about is that arrangements are made for emptying them when full and replacing the black bags. We are hoping that nearby residents and businesses will take on this responsibility – at a cost of something over R1 for a black bag and a few minutes of your time. When a bin appears near you, will you do this? Getting the town back to where we want it requires the involvement of many. Writing to chat groups does not go far enough.

WHAT OUR TOWN NEEDS

What we need, of course is the Council to wake up and recognise that White River's infrastructure is well past sell-by date, and needs replacing and up grading now, rather than next year. The WRRRA and TPO8000 sat down recently and compiled a list of projects that we felt are necessary for the continued well-being of the town. This was submitted to the Council for their IDP (Integrated Development Plan). It was nearly three pages long. At a very recent EXCO meeting of the WRRRA a Council official was present and went through the IDP process as it is supposed to happen. We then pointed out to the official that his list of "achievements" presented at the meeting included one poorly finished project, one which was very badly managed, one which was described as a "disaster", three which were nothing to do with Ward 30 (the town) and two which had not been carried out properly. In a second page of the presentation was a list of "current funded projects", none of which have been started. Funds have been allocated in the past, then withdrawn so the projects wait another year – for example upgrade of Tom Lawrence Street and a third reservoir.

It was made clear to the official that we have reached the end of our tolerance of incompetence, poor service delivery and a general lack of commitment by the Council. We the residents and ratepayers of White River are now ready to take the whole issue to the next step, a move which will result in severe censure of the Council. See also TPO8000 report.



REPORT FROM TPO8000

The Power of 8000 is alive and well with several projects on the go. We have done several clean-ups over the past few weeks, including Msholozhi entrance intersection, First Avenue (which is the service road running parallel to Chief MK Drive), a huge job on the R537 across from Spur, Kiepersol St, Danie Joubert St (from Parkville to Uplands) and another gargantuan task on the corner of Tafelberg St. All in all this was about 200 black bags. The Council assisted with the removal of some and we transported the rest to the transfer station ourselves. We are also forging ahead with “Operation Asblik” and you have no doubt seen now, fresh bins are appearing at strategic places in town. There are more to come.

Nic Maartens has been championing the rehabilitation of the Tafelberg corner and has done an amazing job. The amount of trash that has come out of there is shocking. We are planning to plant some indigenous trees, shrubs, and plants. Salute to you Nic!



Meanwhile, there is some serious stuff happening around the table. We have had the highest possible level meetings with various officials and stakeholders, including tackling the license department debacle, Waste department, ongoing interaction with Parks department, submission of a comprehensive IDP submission, meeting with the Buy Local campaign organizers, and most exciting of all, a meeting with other business and community leaders including the President and senior delegation from the Small Business Institute. Now, this is potentially a real game-changer. Not quite ready for a report yet but WATCH THIS SPACE. There is some really serious change on the way and fortunately, we are established and ready. Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers and those who donate to make our work possible.

The results of our success are all around you and people are popping up everywhere adding to the positive change.

Any donations and offers of assistance will be well received.

STOP PRESS

A marvelous job has been done by TPO8000 in cleaning up the area around the Post Office, where huge numbers gather daily to collect their grants. Brilliant effort.

Thank you to Fat Cake City for providing food and drink for the staff cleaning up.





REPORT FROM COMMUNITY POLICE FORUM

Neighbourhood Security

A couple of months before Covid arrived and turned our lives upside down a few friends decided that there was no alternative but to take direct, personal action against the constant crime that was besieging our neighborhoods. The decision was taken that the best immediate option was to start nighttime patrols and so began a great success story.

X38 was the first area to start taking action. In those early days, we were having crimes every week, including constant dog poisonings, theft of vehicles, theft out of vehicles, and home burglary, most of which were taking place at night.

From the outset, we decided to take a professional approach and make sure we had all our bases covered. This involved producing a written protocol, indemnity, methods of communication, and CPF registration. We also established an "X38 Crime Watch" Whatsapp group. It was a wild ride at the beginning. We had few volunteers and lots of activity to deal with, but the success soon became very clear to everyone in the area. The Crime Watch Group grew to over 100 people within a few weeks and soon we had to open a second group to cope with the numbers.

As we grew so did the number of volunteer patrollers which helped spread the load.

Soon we were approached by other areas and now White River boasts 3 patrol groups with over 60 registered patrollers covering a large portion of the residential areas in White River and our crime rate has plummeted and our property values are increasing!

All thanks to an involved community and a dedicated group of patrollers.



OUR LICENSING DEPARTMENT

I am asked to report that the WRRRA Chairman has written to the Minister of Transport, the Mpumalanga President, The Provincial Minister of Safety and Security, and the Mayor of Mbombela regarding the very poor and downright aggressive attitudes present in our licensing offices.

A total of 15 specific objections were listed, including opening hours, long waits, slow-moving queues, senior staff unavailable, operation issues such as eye testing and fingerprinting being periodically unavailable, rudeness of staff, and more.

It was noted again at the Exco meeting that the whole operation has been taken over by the province. Part of the problem is that a number of the staff are objecting to this take-over and are creating problems. This issue will take some time to sort out and the province is working on it. We have to be patient a little longer.



THANK YOU FOR CARING ABOUT OUR TOWN

In both these reports, we must all be grateful that there are a number of our citizens who are prepared to go beyond talking and be active in preserving our town. Our congratulations to you all.

Stay Safe Everyone

Simon Evered
083 659 6296
simon@evered.co.za

EXCLUSIVE NEWS

Of particular interest to us all is the provision of clean potable water to the town with a consistently reliable supply which is not interrupted. This is clearly what we have not got at present.

Attending the very recent WRRRA EXCO meeting was Pieter Gouws, a recent immigrant! to this part of the world, and I am glad to say a newly enrolled very welcome member of the WRRRA.

Pieter, a Pr. Eng., is an expert on dams and is Managing Director of PG Consulting Engineers whose logo includes the words "Passionate about dams". He has been consulting with Mr. Jack Brotherton of Coolmore Farms, who wish to build a dam in the valley on the way to Uplands. Pieter has also a long friendship with WRRRA's Robin Clanahan and has been consulting with Robin on this project.

Coolmore has agreed to accommodate a portion of the water retained in this dam to Mbombela, to use to top up the emergency supply to White River when necessary. This would require an additional expense to a temporary small pumping system to pump water from the dam to the nearby existing canal. The replacement of the canal with a gravity pipeline has been evaluated before by Clanahan but unfortunately, Mbombela was unable to find funds for this work and discussions ceased. Coolmore has since said that he intends to build the dam and will include the additional work, so long as Mbombela undertakes to recompense them at a later date.

Mbombela must now agree to this arrangement. Of course, the construction and partial use of the dam will be of great benefit to the town, and we wait further developments.

