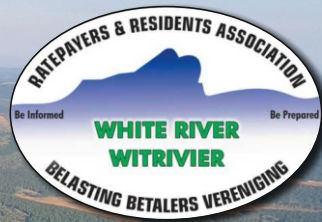


NEWSLETTER

October 2020



Welcome To Our Monthly Newsletter

We have quite a lot to share with you but first some housekeeping.



September 1st is the beginning of our book year and subscriptions are now due. Many thanks to the more than half of you who have already paid. To those who have not, this is a timely REMINDER that your subscription of R150 is now due to FNB, Account number 6222 664 35 93, Branch Code 27 05 52 in the name of White River Ratepayers Association.

Now an urgent request. Will the member who paid on the 28th or 29th of August and simply wrote as reference "2021 Subs" please identify yourself, so that I can log the payment. We have asked many times for members to be sure to record their names or their membership numbers with their payments.

Members please take a moment to help the WRRA along and pass on this newsletter to a neighbour, friend by whatever means. New members would be very welcome and would increase our influence with the Mbombela council, the bigger we get.

"The Department of health is looking for couples who have been married for 7 years or more, to educate the rest about social distancing."

NOW FOR A MORE SERIOUS ISSUE

Now for a more serious issue. It is becoming clear that a small number of residents are becoming increasingly fed up with the way issues and complaints are being dealt with. These "hotheads" are saying that the WRRA is not doing a good job in working for the people of White River, they want the Council replaced and to stop paying rates, and they operate the town as a separate unit. To paraphrase "we do not our money spent on Kabokweni and Kanyamazane". To these noisy people the WRRA has to say "your opinion is heard over loudly and clear, and when are you actually going to DO SOMETHING?"

Let us make one point clear. **The WRRA is NOT going to advocate or do anything illegal.** To withhold rates is an illegal act, resulting on individuals being prosecuted, as well as having services cut off. All this will cost residents money, probably in excess of the withheld rates, in legal fees, to restore services, if at all. Then whoever is selected to maintain the town's infrastructure will also have to be paid. So, to those few who have sent out abusive messages, how about at least being polite and be ready to discuss your grievances without insults. Can we instead arrange a meeting between the hotheads and the WRRA committee so that we can discuss a way forward? Differing points of view may be helpful.

Dealing with breakdowns and complaints is not always as fast as it should be. We all know this. The town's infrastructure is beyond sell-by date and requires a lot of expensive refurbishment. The Council, like many in the country, is short of funds and resources. This is more than just corruption – it is national government's failure to fund municipalities adequately. The problem is bigger than staff incompetence or corruption locally.

So instead of shouting louder and louder, to no apparent purpose, the WRRA is keeping its head down and Councillor Rowan Torr is in more or less daily conversation with Council officials in order to get complaints dealt with, either at committee meetings or on site visits. We do not have to be active in local chat groups in order to get on with what needs doing.

Apart from chasing up water not flowing, sewage pipes blocked or broken, street lighting failures, we also keep an eye on other issues as well,

- New schools, seriously overdue.
- Developments which may be ill-advised, such as Colt's Hill.
- Communication with Transnet on possibly re-opening the local network, to attract tourists.
- Other capital projects, such as a new reservoir and street refurbishment.
- Having the clinic upgraded.
- Provision of public toilets in town.
- Provision of an electrical transformer for the town.
- Demarcation of the Ward boundaries for election purposes.

Incidentally on street lighting, the cherry picker is broken and so lights on very tall poles are at present inaccessible. On sewage, the Council has committed itself to blasting some of the sewage pipes through the town which have become partially or completely blocked,

Perhaps on a grander scale, the WRRA gives input on the Integrated Development Plan – the IDP. We are still waiting for the planned new reservoir, which will assist in keeping water supply constant, and the upgrade to Tom Lawrence Street. The potholes at the Danie Joubert end of the street are now all over the place and alarmingly deep. Drive carefully! When will they be fixed?

The White River Water Treatment Works and the Augmentation Scheme are due for refurbishment in the 2022/3 year. Upgrading the Clinic and the Fire Station are also listed

Of course, by saying all this in a newsletter to members, one would hope that there is agreement amongst you all that we, essentially your committee, are doing the right thing. Nevertheless, one also hopes this newsletter goes further that the members only and thus informs the large number of residents who have not joined us.

"We come from dust and we will return to dust. That is why I do not dust - it might be someone I knew"
- A local housewife -

let's talk!



To get back to chatting on line, Facebook has a new page "Lets Chat White River Ratepayers Association" as part of our Facebook page. This is to replace WRRA1 which will shortly be for members only. Spread the word.

Concern has been raised about additional unofficial and possibly illegal taxi ranks opening up around town.
The WRRA is looking into this



Another complaint that has come to light is the number of flies that seem to be attracted to the town and surroundings. Fly swatters are at a premium, I hear! The WRRA has looked into this and has addressed the issue, which appears to have its source at Heidel Eggs. Management there have been scrambling(!!) for a solution for some time, egged on(!!) by local disaffection. The fact is they try very hard to control the problem, giving the chickens larvicide in their food, especially in hot weather. This takes a little time to go through the process, so sometimes the flies win, as it were.

"I started out with nothing - I still have most of it"

That is it for this month. Summer is coming and hopefully with rain.

Simon Evered
083 659 6296