On 18 December 2009, the Executive Mayor hosted council employees at a year-end lunch. Councillors, senior managers, heads of department and officials tucked into a delicious braai, while a DJ set the mood for a year-end function with some good sounds!

In her address, the mayor thanked staff for their co-operation in 2009, and recalled what had happened during the course of the year.

Steve Tshwete remains the title holder of the ‘Mpumalanga Cleanest Town’ award for 2009, an achievement to be proud of.

And on a less positive note, the mayor reminded council staff of the vandalism that took place during the SAMWU national strike in July, when vehicles of some council employees were set alight, as well as her personal VIP vehicle. Staff were warned that although South Africa is a democratic country where strikes are allowed, vandalism would not be tolerated.

Solly Mahlangu performs at the MRM Festival.

More than three thousand people waited in great anticipation for the arrival of the new, (very special) year, at the Themba Senamela Stadium in Mhluzi.

The Moral Regeneration festival on 31 December began the countdown from as early as 6 o’clock, celebrating with a line up of famous artists. Fans screamed at the top of their voices as they saw their favourite entertainers take to the stage, one by one: Pastor Jacob Mofokeng and Pastor Isaac Mtsweni, (both from Ikwe-kwezi FM), Gospel Legend, Solly Mahlangu, as well as local favourites Mpho (The Psalmist), Izingceku and many more.

Forming part of the crowd of 3 000 was the Executive Mayor of Steve Tshwete Municipality, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu, and many other councillors and officials.

A few minutes before midnight they took to the stage to pray for peace and moral regeneration within the Steve Tshwete Municipality.

Fireworks lit up the night sky in welcoming of 2010, while gospel fans raised their hands in praise and worship, thanking the Almighty for the new year.

In the light of the approaching dawn, pastors descended from the stage to the soccer field where they prayed for the sick. They were joined by many prayer-seeking men and women who responded faithfully to the ‘alter call’.

MAYBA
Ev Thomas Mpye, former Speaker for the Municipality, recently resigned from all duties in order to pursue his career as a full-time pastor. Following from this, a council sitting was held by the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality on 17 December 2009 in order to elect a new Speaker. The council was chaired by Municipal Manager, Willie Fouché, who requested the house to nominate two candidates for the position of Speaker. Councillors Elfas Mathebula from the African National Congress (ANC) and Hennie Niemann from the Democratic Alliance (DA), were both proposed for the position.

Mathebula won the election with a total of 24 votes, and in his first address thanked his comrades for allowing him the opportunity to serve the council as the Speaker. Officials from the council’s Legal and Administration Department, who were operating under the guidelines of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), conducted the elections.

Elfas Fana Mathebula has a history of political involvement going back to 1986 when, at the age of 12, he joined fellow learners of Nkomazi Primary School in speaking out against corporal punishment. During the 90’s he was a member of the community who were fighting the ‘Black Cats’, a left wing group used by the apartheid regime to fight freedom fighters.

He was also the president of the SRC (Student Representative Council) at Kwazamokuhle Secondary School, and also became the Middelburg sub-regional (currently called the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality) Co-ordinator for the ANC. In 2001 Mathebula was elected as the Chairperson of the ANC and the ANC Youth League at the Siyakha-Ummutho branch. After the bi-elections of 2002, he was also elected as a Ward Councillor.

In 2006, during the general local elections, he worked as a Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) and was responsible for Infrastructure Development and Service Delivery.

As the new council speaker, Elfas Mathabula will ensure public participation in Ward Community Meetings, Ward Committee meetings and others, as well as ensure that council meetings are run according to the legislation. He is also responsible for the well being of the councillors - when councillors have problems and challenges, they consult the office of the Speaker.

The Steve Tshwete Municipality was recently voted ‘The Greenest Municipality in Mpumalanga’ now going forward to the national competition which will be assessed by a judging panel from the Department of Environmental Affairs.

This prestigious award is based on • waste management • energy efficiency and conservation • water management • landscaping, tree planting and beautification • public participation and community empowerment • leadership and institutional arrangements.

Congratulations are in order for the municipality on this achievement.
In July 1997 Mr Sydney Kunene, who at that time was a councillor and member of the Executive Committee of the Mhluzi Chamber of Commerce, applied to purchase land from the council.

Before the application was finalised, Cllr Kunene, in his capacity as chairperson of the Mhluzi COC, withdrew the application and substituted it with an application from a company by the name of Trade-Off, of which he is a major shareholder.

Furthermore, before the sale of the land to Trade-Off was finalised, a policy was adopted by the council (at the initiative of Cllr Kunene and Cllr Mokoena, who was the Chairperson of the Executive Committees of the Middelburg Transitional Council at the time) that a discount be applied to all land purchased by the council in Mhluzi.

Trade-Off received a 20% discount on the purchase price. This was subject to the condition that building must commence within 12 months, and be completed within three years.

However, a period of five years has now lapsed since Trade-Off gave their final undertaking to government to commence building on this property.

The contract was initially signed on 23 August 2004. There was no progress with the (promised) erection of a shopping complex, and in March 2007 they were given a further six months to commence, and two years to complete the building. Again, no progress was made.

In February 2008 they were, once again, given further extensions. These extensions contractually required that by March 2009 ‘the building be cleaned, occupied and functional’.

If the conditions of this final contract were not adhered to, the property would revert back to the council at the cost of the developer, with no compensation paid for any improvements.

The contract also demanded that monthly reports on the progress be submitted to the Mayoral Committee.

None of the requirements were complied with.

In May 2009, Trade-Off was given a final opportunity to erect the shopping complex on condition that it be 20% complete by December 2009. Again, no progress was made.

Currently, the process of re-transferring the land is underway. The people of Mhluzi have been deprived of proper shopping facilities for too long, and it is believed that other developers should be given the opportunity to provide these much needed facilities to the community.

Rob Sole and Sydney Kunene at the site of the eMhluzi Mall development shortly after the land was secured.

What’s happening at eMhluzi Mall

New shopping mall for Mhluzi residents

By Nonkonkoko Mondlane

Job creators is the buzzword among the community of Mhluzi townships as they anticipate the opening of a shopping mall estimated to be worth R86 million.

According to Mr David Hanney of Anthius Architects, the mall is expected to open for business in March 2009.

A sod-turning ceremony to mark the construction of eMhluzi Mall and to celebrate the approval of the project by the local municipality took place on March 11 and was graced by the presence of the executive mayor of Steve Tshwete Municipality, Cllr Mathabang Mahlangu as well as members of the mayoral committee and property developers, among other stakeholders.

The shopping complex will be built in the heart of the township between extensions 3 and 4 and will be easily accessible to thousands of people.

It will comprise 10 000 square metres of space. The Pick n Pay group has already taken approximately 2 000 square metres for three of its stores.

Fashion groups are well represented as there will be a food court comprising of well-known restaurants, fast-food outlets as well as a drive through.

There’s also a possibility of a full banking branch along with several ATMs since negotiations with a local banking group are nearing completion.

Other services to be rendered at the mall include a post office for the local municipality, a post office and professional services for doctors.

It is estimated that the completed mall will create some 200 permanent jobs for locals.

“I can’t wait for it to be operational, not only will it make our lives easier in terms of acquiring basic commodities quicker and saving on taxi fares in town, but I’m sure our unemployed children will get work there,” commented an enthusiastic Ms Zolile Masango.

Mahlangu expressed his gratitude that finally construction was proceeding.

This development bears testimony to the fact that which Middelburg’s economy is growing. On April 10 last year, another project was launched called the La Rosa Precinct which consists of La Rosa Mall, Valme Meub and supporting lands usage.

The first phase of the project was completed and it involved the construction and turning of roads, as well as the provision of services to the 37 separate properties that make up the precinct.

It is envisaged that the mall will comprise some 30 000 square metres retail space at a cost of approximately R300 million and is expected to open in November 2008.
Nkangala donates truck

Over and above the R200-million budget allocation to our municipality for the 2009/10 financial year from Nkangala District Municipality, a Honey Sucker truck was donated to Steve Tshwete Municipality, valued at R100-million.

This unexpected windfall was revealed on 17 March at the IDP Forum meeting by Charles Makola, Municipal Manager : Nkangala District Municipality - taking everyone by surprise.

Expressing both gratitude and delight, the Executive Mayor, IMT Mahlangu, and Municipal Manager, Willie Fouché, thanked the district for this generous donation, which will greatly assist our Sewerage department.

Fines for illegal dumping

The community of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality is hereby cautioned against illegal dumping. Fines amounting to R500 and more - depending on the nature of the dumping - will be issued to anyone caught dumping.

Each and every resident of our municipality must keep it clean, so that we can maintain the title of ‘cleanest town’ in the province, and even nationally.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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HENDRINA AND SURROUNDING AREAS

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Celebrating with a difference was the aim of all the Steve Tshwete municipality libraries when they participated in National Library Week from 22 to 27 March.

This celebration was part of the national celebrations countrywide, commemorating the establishment of the first library in Cape Town, a few centuries ago.

During library week, patrons and schools who visited were orientated on how to access information in a library.

Leading up to Library Week, a road show throughout the municipality was conducted by staff members, distributing pamphlets and inviting the community to use local libraries to gain knowledge.

During the launch on 19 March, representatives from government departments, parastatals, learners and other guests ensured the success of this event, rendering insightful speeches, poems, music and dance.

Distinguished guests included, the MMC for Housing, Special Services, Culture, Sport and Recreation - Thoko Mabanola, members of the Mayoral Committee, Municipal Manager - Willie Fouché, Executive Managers, Subject Advisor : Library and Information Services Mpumalanga Department of Education - Laura Nel, Deputy Chief Education Specialist for Library and Computers In Education Nkangala region - Vusumuzi Mgwenya as well as Mutual Support Chairperson of Mamelodi Sun-downs, George Shiba.

In her keynote address, MMC, Thoko Mabanola, noted that the municipality has made it a tradition to celebrate this historic week each year.

With the ten libraries operating within the municipal area, and more to come, she said that the municipality was determined that all people have access to literacy and can harness it to expand their horizons and their skills.

“Access to information promotes critical thinking, particularly among the youth, who can learn to understand differing and even conflicting dimensions of the same issue. The librarian is the critical agent in this chain which ensures that these resources reach the general public”, she said.

Other activities included a presentation on fire fighting by the Fire and Rescue department, Children’s games, painting on stones, paper craft and talk shows. The Health department presented a lecture on drugs and staff members paid visits to hospitals, the prison, a home for the disabled and old aged homes.
Mayor honours the cleanest schools

Following a suggestion by the Executive Mayor, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu, schools in the municipality have competed for the first time in the 2009 Cleanest School Competition.

The competition, which was held on 26 February, was facilitated by the municipal Health department. Speaking during the event, the Executive Mayor emphasised the importance of our environment and urged teachers to inculcate a culture of cleanliness in learners whilst they are still young.

“Global warming is a human error, and we therefore need to do our part in trying to reduce it, by taking care of our environment in all ways possible,” she added.

All schools were invited to participate in this competition, however, only 18 schools responded. They are: Mthombeni Primary, Mvuzo Primary, LD Moetanalo Secondary, Sozama Secondary, Elusindsweni, Zikhuphule Primary, Manyano Primary, Mphanama Comprehensive, Middelburg Combined, Eikeboom Primary, Kanhyam Agricultural, Makhathini Combined, Reatlegile Primary, Mhluzi Primary, Thushanang Primary, Batlagae Primary, Mkhulu Combined and Hendrina Primary Schools.

The Mayor’s parlour buzzed with excitement when Hendrina Primary School was announced overall winner of the competition. The school was awarded a trophy and a cheque of R5 000.

Second place went to Batlagae Primary School who earned R3 000, and Zikhuphule Primary School came third, pocketing R2 000.

All the participating schools received certificates of participation.

The Executive Mayor congratulated all the participating schools and reminded those who were not in participation.

Emotions rose again when the Executive Mayor handed over four computers, donated by PG Computers, to deserving schools, namely, Bankfontein, LD Moetanalo, Tsiki Naledi and Mkhulu Combined Schools.

Principal, Monty Kgabe of Tsiki Naledi Combined School headmaster expressed his gratitude to the Executive Mayor and team, saying: “On behalf of our staff members, Student Governing Body, parents and learners, I want to thank the Executive Mayor and her team for having identified this school as one of those in dire need for a technological equipment like a computer.

“Your identification of the school was extremely accurate and it came at the right time when we least expected it. Our school had no computer at all. All documents of the school, including the analysis of matric results, compilation of year-end internal schedule, preparation for school readiness for coming academic year as well as the drafting of the year plan, was done manually.

“That is why I had to sacrifice my 2009 December holidays to prepare documents, like the school time table for 2010 so that it could be ready on the first day of re-opening. A school without a computer during this technological era is not only disempowered, but also dysfunctional.

“Indeed an institution like ours without a computer was just like one being thrown into the deep without any swimming skills.

“It is from the bottom of my heart that I thank the Mayor and her team for having offered the school this valuable asset which will be used beneficially for the upgrading of all the administrative requirements of the school.

“May the good Lord continue to bless your office richly and provide you with more visionary ideas for the community you serve. We are grateful. Thank you.”

Sipho Masemola, Headmaster of Bankfontein Combined School also thanked the Mayor and her team, saying:

“On behalf of the School Governing Body and the school, I want to thank the Executive Mayor and the Council for the kind donation. The donation came at a right time, because presently we do not have a computer.

“In the past I used to think that the visits to our schools had no impact. But now I can see that something is done about their findings in schools.

“Since December 2008, we have lost three computers and a projector through burglary. The matter is presently in court.

“May God bless you and we appreciate your kindness. Thank you.”

The Headmaster of LD Moetanalo, Vusi Tholo had this to say:

“The certificate for participation in the Cleanest School Competition was a motivating factor since we did not win last year and it indicated to us that what we have been doing as far as our environment is concerned has been recognised.

“The computer came at a point when we were planning to link the administration to the staff room. So now, it will be used by educators to access information on the internet without disturbing the administration.

“We appreciate the gesture by the Steve Tshwete done to the school.”

The Executive Mayor, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu, hands over computers to the Headmasters of LD Moetanalo, Mkhulu Combined, Tsiki Naledi Combined and Bankfontein Combined Schools.
Martin Mokwana, Headmaster of Mphanama Secondary School, receives a certificate of good performance for 2009 matric results from the Executive Mayor, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu during the Cleanest School Competition ceremony held at the municipality recently.

When schools reopened on 13 January the streets were abuzz with learners, teachers and parents as they made their way to various assembly points in the Steve Tshwete Municipal jurisdiction. Among them was Executive Mayor, Mantlhankeng Mahlangu, accompanied by the Chief Whip, Michael Masina, Ward 6 Councillor Beauty Simelane and the municipal Youth Outreach Officer, Marcus Masemola, who set out to pay a visit to Mphanama Secondary School in Mhluzi.

She wished the new class of 2010 all the best in their studies, and explained to all the learners how special they are since their academic year (2010) is a very important one for South Africans.

Congratulations were also in order as the school principal and his team had produced some excellent Matric results in 2009. Out of 107 pupils who registered for the 2009 Senior Certificate Examinations there were 68 who passed, with nine gaining entrance into tertiary institutions.

Special congratulations are in order to the following students:

- Lawrence Mahlangu, who obtained 93% in Mathematics, 83% in English and 91% in Life Orientation.
- Kgokedi Gilbert Shaku, for 82% in mathematics and 84% in life orientation.
- Comfort Mashiloane, for 82% in Mathematics and 83% in Life Orientation.

During a closed door meeting with the Principal, the Executive Mayor and her team learned that Mphanama Secondary had received stationery well ahead of time during the December holidays. Some of the findings by the mayor included the following:

- Punctuality for learners averages 90%, and educators were found to be 100% on time, all the time.
- 2010 enrolment is 1 100 students.
- The Educator Learner Ratio is 1:28 (one teacher for every 28 students).
- The state of the school facilities was good.
- Learner transport is in place for pupils residing at Bank Colliery.
- Nutrition Programmes/Feeding Schemes are also available to Grade seven learners, as well as senior learners who come from needy families.
- Crime has gone down following the ‘Adopt a Cop’ programme.

As part of finding a solution to the problems relating to safety at the school, the mayor strongly suggested that the school adopt a policy of locking the gates during learning hours. Responding to this, the school’s headmaster, Martin Mokwana, indicated that this may not be possible as the broken fence, which prevents the locking of the gate, will cost over R100 000 to fix. Sadly, this is another case of insufficient funds.

MPHANAMA HONOURED
As part of her Mayoral Outreach to the community, the Executive Mayor, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu, accompanied by members of the mayoral committee, councillors and officials, met with the residents of Wards six, seven and nine on 21 February, to address the challenges in these wards.

The Mayor opened the meeting with a short address and thanked the youth for their interest in government issues. This meeting coincided with 20th anniversary of Nelson Mandela’s release from prison and she quoted some words of wisdom from his speeches.

Outlining some of the challenges faced by the municipality to speedily address problems within the wards, she offered the following solutions:

- Poles holes caused by the erection of tents on tarred roads needed to be repaired. The community was cautioned to stop erecting tents on tarred roads, as this resulted in pot-holes which the municipality had to repair. She warned that new by-laws, soon to be implemented, will allow the municipality to take punitive action against those responsible.
- People who extend their houses without approval from the municipality, were urged to submit a plan for approval. Unauthorised construction leads to serious damage of municipal pipes.
- Burst pipes in Thembisa and Phumula are presently being replaced with new ones.
- The Reabota hostel will be converted to family units. This follows a resolution by national government to convert hostels into family units.
- The Steve Tshwete Housing Association will soon be developing accommodation for people to buy and to rent.
- Rental stock is earmarked to accommodate those who do not qualify either for an RDP house nor a housing bond.
- The Mayor responded to complaints received by the municipality regarding the demarcation of parks, explaining that parks were created to enhance the urban environment.
- The Thushanang Primary School building, which was donated by the municipality to the community for arts and crafts projects, is not in use due to continuous cable theft.
- A time was allocated for interaction, suggestions and feedback from the residents. Their concerns focused on pavements, streets lights, RDP houses, poor loud hailing, the corridor in Ward 6, renovation of the Eric Jiyane Hall, projects for women, potholes, jobs, storm water, youth development, speed humps and pipe bursts.

The Mayor responded to these issues, promising residents that their concerns would be attended to promptly. She also gave advice as to how residents could handle other issues facing them.

Optimum community trust is launched

On 10 March, the Optimum Coal Community Trust, a division of Optimum Collieries, was officially launched at Tholulwazi Primary School in Extension 24, Ward 17. Our Executive Mayor, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu, was one of the speakers. She expressed her appreciation of the exceptional work done by the Trust, commending them for prioritizing education. She also chairs the provincial government committee for health and education and is passionate about education.

Projects which the mayoral office and the Trust have collaborated on, involved identifying learners who attained matriculation exemptions which would allow them to enter university. Six such learners were identified for the 2010 intake and have been awarded bursaries.

The trust also worked with the mayoral office on a programme to help those learners who failed matric, to rewrite in December of 2009.

Prior to the launch ceremony at Tholulwazi Primary School, the Chairperson of the board of trustees for the Optimum Coal Community Trust, Dr Mike Teke, (who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Optimum Coal), and other executive members of the trust, visited a number of disadvantaged schools in the municipal jurisdiction, where they distributed 11 000 lap-desks.

PROFILE OF THE OPTIMUM COAL COMMUNITY TRUST

In 2008, the founders of Optimum Coal Holdings, which own the Optimum Coal Group, established the Optimum Community Trust - an independent legal entity, which is a shareholder of Optimum Coal Holdings.

It is represented by nominated trustees - two community members and two from Optimum Coal Holdings.

Community ownership through a trust allows everybody to share in the benefits of the shareholding in a fair and equitable manner.

This community ownership will ensure that the benefits remain within the community and the trust can ensure sustained benefit to the community over the life of the mine and beyond.

Trusts are a popular vehicle for broad-based community ownership, particularly in the mining industry, and they are accepted for BEE ownership in terms of the BB-BEE Codes of Good Practice and by the Department of Mineral Resources.

WHICH COMMUNITIES ARE TO BENEFIT?

The Trust has been established for the benefit of the following communities:

- Communities in the surrounds of Optimum Mines and the neighbouring towns.
- Other communities will be included as the Optimum Coal Group expands its mining activities into their areas.

HOW WILL THIS HAPPEN?

Communities are to benefit as a collective, through social and economic upliftment projects approved by the Trustees in line with the socio-economic development priorities of the areas.

The Trust will not distribute the dividends to individuals within the community but, rather, individuals may be a beneficiary in the context of a project such as a bursary scheme.
S

delete department, charity organisations, medical centers, companies in the private sector and billions of individuals around the globe commemorated World AIDS Day on 1 December.

Steve Tshwete Local Municipality also made its mark; a day ahead of the commemorations, the municipality gathered over 1,140 of its employees at the municipal parking basement, where matters of concern on AIDS & HIV were confronted head-on.

Exhibitions by the municipal health department were mounted, where free booklets on HIV & AIDS, condoms and general advice was freely available.

Keynote speakers who contributed greatly towards the success of this event were Fabien Nove, a well known AIDS & HIV Activist, and Criselda Kananda, who presents an HIV & AIDS talk show on Metro FM.

Both speakers are living with the HIV virus, and advised those present to apply a positive attitude towards the disease.

Nove encouraged council employees to go for HIV & AIDS tests. He said this would help those who are HIV positive to seek early treatment before it is too late. He then went on to explain the difference between HIV & AIDS.

HIV is a virus that is found in the blood if one has tested positive. However, it does not mean that one has AIDS, simply that one has the virus that can cause AIDS. It is only when the immune system can no longer fight the virus that one can be declared to have a full blown AIDS.

Criselda Kananda spoke about self-love and inspired Steve Tshwete Municipal employees to love themselves unconditionally, regardless of their HIV status. She shared her encounters through her journey with the virus and related moments in her life where people admired her for the person she is.

Both speakers encouraged municipal employees to get tested for the virus and know their status, enabling them to take precautionary measures if they test positive.

The emotional event was attended by the Executive Mayor, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu, Municipal Manager, Willie Fouché, Councillor Thoko Mabanola (MMC responsible for Health, Social Services, Culture, Sport and Recreation), Councillor Rehana Pilodia (MMC responsible for Economic Development, Finance and Auditing), Councillor Bongani Mayaba (MMC for Transport, Safety and Security), ward and PR councillors.

Following the keynote speakers, a candle lighting session was held by the Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager and Senior Manager of Health Services, Magaret Skosana. They were joined by representatives from the municipal workers’ unions (SAMWU and IMATU).

Skosana explained the significance of lighting the candles and the meanings in the different colours: The yellow candle was lit for pregnant women and children with HIV; the red candle was lit to honour and remember those who have passed away from the deadly virus, and the white candle represents the hope that one day we will find a cure for HIV & AIDS.
Mayor makes education everybody’s business

Two days ahead of the schools re-opening, the Executive Mayor of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu, invited all educational stakeholders to attend a meeting at the MPCC hall. Present were pastors, councillors, parents, educators, unions, bursary funding schemes, local media, business, learners and all other stakeholders in the community who are affected by educational issues.

The three key objectives of the meeting were to exchange ideas on improving the education system in Steve Tshwete Municipality; to involve everybody in the community in education and to improve matric results for the class of 2010 and beyond.

During her address to the packed hall, Mayor Mahlangu expressed concerns over the poor matric performance within the province for 2009. She cautioned the audience that it is “high time people stop pointing fingers at each other and should instead hold hands in helping to improve the education and results of our learners.”

In her capacity as the chairperson of the provincial subcommittee on health and educational matters, she encouraged learners to take frontline responsibility for their own education, as did a Sowetan pupil quoted as saying, “the whole issue of learning rests in us students.” She advised learners to do this by applying good time management and getting enough sleep.

During a ‘pass the microphone session’, members of the community were given a platform to raise suggestions and find solutions to the on-going educational problems in the province.

Concerns were raised about pupils who take intoxicating substances at schools, and the blame was placed on illegal foreigners who allegedly supply these within the communities. Teachers were charged with a lack of passion and commitment to their work while youths were concerned that information on scholarships and bursaries is not adequately communicated within youth structures.

Council donates land for a good cause

On 22 January, the Steve Tshwete Municipality donated a piece of land to the Eastdene Business Community. Here, they will build a house which will become the administration office for the Paul Mthimunye Bursary Fund. This fund assists needy students in the Middelburg area by funding their studies at both high school and tertiary educational levels.

Speaking on behalf of the Executive Mayor at the official hand-over of the land was Cllr Rihana Pilodia who is the MMC responsible for Economic Development, Finance and Audit. She said the council was pleased to see people helping each other in the community and that the Municipality will continue to assist in such projects.

The hand-over ceremony was also attended by the Municipal Manager, Willie Fouché; Deputy Secretary of the Paul Mthimunye Bursary Fund, George Mahlangu; Teacher, Nomusa Tholo; Donor Pastor Yoga Naidoo; Paul Mthimunye himself; Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mniwa Mahlangu; donors, Solly Latief and Dr Ahmed Kola and Cllr Jeanette Mgdeza.

The Paul Mthimunye Bursary Fund was started in August 2001, but was officially launched by Craig Padayache (former MEC for Education), on 15 August 2003. The bursary covers the entire municipal area of Steve Tshwete and aims to assist those who are most in need and with the highest potential to succeed.

The idea of having The Paul Mthimunye Bursary Fund came from a former resident of Middelburg, Sipho Mthombeni, who started and completed his schooling in Middelburg prior to pursuing university studies. He generously donated R50 000 to kick-start this worthy project. This idea was warmly embraced by the community.

It was Mthombeni who recommended that the fund be named after Paul Mthimunye, one of the most dedicated Educationists that Middelburg has ever known. Mthimunye’s career in education has spanned more than 30 years, covering roles from teacher, High School Principal, Inspector of Schools, Director, Chief Director to Manager of Education Projects. He is highly respected in the local community as a tireless community worker and volunteer.

The vision and the mission of this fund is to uplift, promote and improve the skills base within the community, including:

- Unlocking the potential of learners through support programmes.
- Impacting positively within the community by generating funds and awarding bursaries.
- Providing bursaries to deserving learners and tertiary education students who are pursuing Maths, Science, Accounting, Technology and other fields of study in keeping with the principle of supply and demand.
- Organising an annual careers exhibition which will help students identify careers which offer better prospects of finding employment; or starting businesses which enables them to contribute to economic growth in South Africa.
- Giving bursars real-life experience and life skills which aid them in the workplace.

The Paul Mthimunye Bursary Fund is governed by a Board of Trustees drawn from different sectors of the community: private, public and education. The Trustees give their time and expertise to the Bursary Fund without remuneration. They consider this to be part of their contribution to the community in which they reside.

The Bursary Fund’s financial books and statement are audited annually and all donors and funders are sent copies of the audit results soon after they have been issued.

There have been many success stories surrounding the Bursary Fund.

In 2003, a total of 20 high school learners with the potential to succeed were funded. All obtained good passes with the exception of one. One of the bursars excelled in long distance running and was selected to be in a team that represented Mpumalanga Province in Scotland.

Between 2005 and 2007, 62 high school students and 33 tertiary students were funded.

In 2008 and 2009 the Fund provided financial aid to 30 high school learners who are attending a Protec Saturday school, as well as 12 tertiary students from various institutions.
The primary function of both district and local municipalities is effective service delivery. The constitution outlines that the district municipality is responsible for providing bulk supplies and service as well as overall support in the form of project finance to the various town within its area of jurisdiction.

When Executive Mayor of Nkangala District Municipality, Speedy Mashilo, attended a meeting in the Steve Tshwete District on 30 January, it was to assess the service delivery within the district, focusing around all these areas of delivery. He was accompanied by members of his mayoral committee, district councillors, officials and delegates from various government departments.

The address was attended by residents, councillors and the Executive Mayor of the Steve Tshwete Municipality. Speaking specifically to residents, the District Mayor reported on all projects for 2008 and 2009 which were promised to the community, and had been successfully completed.

Mayor Mashilo addressed the audience on several key issues:

**EDUCATION**
On education, he urged parents to encourage their children to work hard this year. He reassured them that the department is currently taking ‘drastic measures’ against those who are corrupt and caused delays for learners with regards to their results.

The Department of Education presented its report on responses to challenges raised in the 2009/10 Nkangala District Municipal Outreach meetings - one of which was the need for a technical college in Hendrina, Ward 19. The response from the Department of Education was that it was the responsibility of the Department of Higher Learning. Nkangala FET College is independent from the region but not the Department of Education. There is no differentiation in the region yet.

The following schools will benefit from the 2010/11 projects:

- Zikhuphule - a fence, four toilets and creche at a cost of R660 000.
- Eikeboom - a fence, four toilets and a creche at a cost of R660 000.
- Elusindisweni - a computer center.
- Maziya - a computer center.
- Mopedi - a library at a cost of R700 000.
- Mthombeni - offices at a cost of R1.3 million.

**AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND ADMINISTRATION**
A report was delivered by the department of Agriculture based upon the plans and progress made in the Masibuyele Emasimini pilot project. The project is aimed at mobilising communities in rural areas to engage in farming activities through the provision of basic assistance, such as the provision of seeds, fertilisers, mechanisation and training.

The department also announced some good news: Through this project, 15 households have acquired 338.2 hectares of planted maize and soya bean.

Rural areas which have benefited are Doornkop, Nootigedacht, Mooiplaas, Leeuwpoorijie, Graspan and Vukanzi Mndeni.

**HEALTH**
The department reported on the progress of 2008/09 projects for the construction of Middelburg Mortuary which is mostly complete. They currently await the installation of electricity.

Another project which started on 15 January 2009 is now completed. This project included renovations of roofs at the Middelburg District Hospital and two wards, upgrading of the helipad, theatres, pharmacy, casualty and a new Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

**CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION**
The department gave an extensive and detailed report on the 2010 World Cup, recreation advancement, school sport and cultural affairs for the entire district.

Mayor Mashilo reiterated a message of hope to all, and said "2010 is a very important year in the history of South Africa, as we will be rolling out the red carpet to the world for the first time in the history of Africa. We hope that it will bring about better jobs and development***. However, of paramount importance is the progress and activities currently taking place in the municipality.

For the 2010 World Cup, the department has spent approximately R30 000 for the training of 40 Local Organising Committee (LOC) members and volunteers for the management of the Confederation Cup. An amount of R2.5 million was spent on a public viewing site at Themba Senamela, and on 14 June 2009 more than 7 000 people attended the public viewing event.

The department spent R3.6 million in advancing the Siyadlala mass participation programme in all six municipalities under the Nkangala District Municipality. Another R1.5 million was spent on the appointment of 70 Siyadlala volunteers within the six municipalities, and another R9.3 million was spent on the appointment of volunteers for the implementation of the School Sport programme.

On school sport, the department has spent R1.8 million to promote participation in school sport. Sixty five schools participated in this...
In January 2009, the Executive Mayor, Mantlhakeng Mahlangu, challenged Optimum Coal to invest in the newly matriculated youth from previously disadvantaged Steve Tshwete communities.

At the time, Optimum Coal responded positively, accepting the challenge, but university registrations had already closed. The mine then negotiated with the University of Witwatersrand to accept top students from Steve Tshwete and the university agreed, reserving five places for students who met their Engineering Faculty entrance requirements.

The Executive Mayor personally visited the respective schools to collect these students and put them on their new paths to higher education.

Currently there is a strong need to invest in Maths, Science and Literacy, but thankfully, this is a need Optimum Coal are willing to meet. They see this investment as a business sustainability imperative in that it contributes directly towards its vision of transformation and its commitments to the local communities as well as the broader South African Society.

The Optimum Coal ‘Maths and Science Programme’ delivers on two separate, yet related, focus areas:

1. The Learner Development Programme, which focuses on creating a skills pool, and
2. The Educator Development Programme, which focuses on creating sustainability and ultimately increasing the reach of this benefit.

The programme entails the training of learners on subject-specific study methods, a literacy programme, a subject-specific Saturday programme, a winter camp that addresses challenging topics per subject, a spring revision exam preparation camp, career guidance, constant motivation and the development of soft skills.

Optimum Coal will be investing R5.8 million per year over a three year period, a total investment of R17 million. The programme will benefit 360 FET learners and 150 FET educators within the Steve Tshwete Municipality communities.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME ARE:

- Learner development of 120 learners per grade in grades 10, 11 and 12, focusing on literacy and numeracy skills.
- Increasing the quality and quantity of school leavers in the subjects of Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting and English, thereby addressing the shortage of critical skills.
- Offering Grade 12 learners career guidance for specific fields.
- Development of 150 educators, enabling them to improve their own subject content knowledge and conveying that to learners in a more effective way, thereby building capacity within the department of Education and creating sustainability.
- Achieving an increase from year to year in the number of learners applying and being admitted into tertiary institutions.

The Optimum Coal ‘Maths and Science Programme’ is designed, developed and managed by Tsebo Education Network, who have also provided a platform for Oxford University Press to donate 100 boxes of books, including text books, study guides, literacy books and dictionaries.

Launching of Maths and Science Programme

As part of upgrading streets in the Steve Tshwete municipal area, Mandela Drive (Tshwelopele Street) and the intersection between Celsius Street and Mandela in Middelburg were closed to traffic.

The road closure commenced on 25 January and the streets became operational again on 16 April.

The Steve Tshwete Local Municipality would like to thank the cooperation from motorists since there were no accidents reported.

CRIME ALERT!

Council officials and members of the public are urged to be on the lookout for car thieves in council parking areas.

In early February, car thieves were spotted in the council parking areas, both at the personnel parking area in the basement and the public parking area in front of the main municipal building.

This comes after thieves were caught red-handed by some council officials: They were opening vehicles with iron sticks in an attempt to steal these vehicles.

One official’s vehicle was recovered shortly after it had been stolen from the basement parking area.

The thieves abandoned the stolen vehicle after the traffic police entered the basement area with sirens blaring. It would appear that the thieves believed the cops were in the area and as a result decided to flee on foot.
The changing of geographical names is taking place throughout the country, and for this purpose, a Geographical Names Council was established by the national government.

The South African Geographical Names Council (SAGNC) was established by the South African Geographical Names Council Act, 1998 (Act No 118 of 1998), as the body responsible for standardising geographical names in South Africa.

The mission of SAGNC is to standardise geographical names in South Africa. This is in order to redress, correct and transform the geographical naming system in the country.

It must be clear that the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality did not initiate this process - it is a national matter which affects all municipalities.

In September 2007, the Local Steve Tshwete Geographical Names Committee made a decision that certain street names and features within the jurisdiction of the municipality must change and those that were not named, be named.

Soon after this decision was taken, the Municipality initiated a consultation process with the community. Inputs from the community and various stakeholders were requested through newspaper advertisements in local newspapers and letters were also written to affected stakeholders such as Middelburg Housing Association, Middelburg Provincial Hospital, Mhluzi Police Station, Middelburg Police Station, Hendrina Secured Care Centre and Doornkop Communal Property Association, informing them of the renaming/naming process.

Responses were accepted via ward meetings, faxes, e-mails, hand-delivered letters and through suggestion boxes at the pay-points, clinics and libraries.

During the consultation process, 234 standard letters were received from citizens objecting to street name changes and in particular, the changing of Kerk, Fontein and Coetzee Streets. At the same time, 549 letters were received from members of the public supporting the process of renaming.

Once this process was completed, the Local Geographical Names Committee met in December 2009 where all the inputs were reviewed. After careful consideration, the recommendation was made to the Mayoral Committee and subsequently to the Council for the proposed names to be adopted.

The final resolution was adopted by the Council on 28 January, 2010. Resolution C08/01/2010 reads as follows:

NAMING/RENAMEING OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL FEATURES RESOLVED BY COUNCIL

- That the report on the meeting on 15 December 2009 of the Local Geographical Names Committee (LGNC) on the local and national features and the recommendations thereof, be noted.
- That under mentioned naming/renaming as considered by the Local Geographical Names Committee (LGNC), be approved and implemented.

### NATIONAL FEATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>FEATURE</th>
<th>NEW NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middelburg Provincial Hospital</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>Ella Mampa Memorial Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mhluzi Police Station</td>
<td>Police Station</td>
<td>Phumzile Mahlangu Police Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middelburg Police Station</td>
<td>Police Station</td>
<td>Sydney Choma Police Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hendrina Secured Care Center</td>
<td>Juvenile delinquents facility</td>
<td>Mpumulelo Secure Care Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doornkop 2</td>
<td>Township</td>
<td>Piet Tshwou Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middelburg (District Office)</td>
<td>Provincial Building</td>
<td>Abdullah Omar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Building</td>
<td>Provincial Building</td>
<td>Siphethu Mlilo Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beta Building</td>
<td>Provincial Building</td>
<td>Solomon Man Mahlangu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old TPA Offices</td>
<td>Provincial Building</td>
<td>DannyBoy Masina</td>
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### LOCAL FEATURES

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<th>FEATURE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<td>Middelburg Association</td>
<td>Mandela Association</td>
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<td>Street</td>
<td>Mhluzi, Aerorand, Industrial area</td>
<td>Mandela Drive</td>
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<td>Mhluzi</td>
<td>Lekoko Street</td>
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<td>Street</td>
<td>Mhluzi</td>
<td>Peter Toshi Street</td>
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<td>Park</td>
<td>Mhluzi</td>
<td>OR Tambo Park</td>
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<td>Community Hall</td>
<td>Mhluzi</td>
<td>Adelaide Tambo</td>
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<td>Street</td>
<td>Mhluzi</td>
<td>Motsepe Street</td>
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<td>Goga Nsibysya Street</td>
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<td>John Magagula Street</td>
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<td>Street</td>
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<td>Samora Machel Street</td>
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<td>Ntshimi Street</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Street</td>
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<td>Ibomani Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Street</td>
<td>New Industrial Area Middelburg Ext 11</td>
<td>Iyaphi Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unnamed Street</td>
<td>Street</td>
<td>New Industrial Area Middelburg Ext 11</td>
<td>Mnatho Street</td>
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<td>24-hour Service Centre</td>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Middelburg</td>
<td>Ntshimi Street</td>
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</tbody>
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Some facts about name changes

THE HERALD - FRIDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2007

Major street names in town may be changed

By: Martin Mokoapane

Everything is subjected to change, and this might happen to some major street names in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. After speaking to Mr Willie Fouche, Steve Tshwete’s Municipal Manager, this newspaper can confirm that members of the public have submitted proposals of new street names to the Council’s Local Geographical and Names Committee (LGNC). The submission follows a public Notice advertisement that was placed in The Herald which invited the public to submit proposals to the committee in question. However, Fouche said a decision has not been made by the committee on the proposed new street names.

“As soon as the Local Geographical and Names Committee have finalised the issue of change of street names, we will make public announcements concerning the new names,” Fouche promised.
programme and competed against each other within the district municipalities.

The department spent approximately R500 000 on the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM), a function which was successfully hosted by the Steve Tshwete Municipality.

HUMAN SETTLEMENT
On the building of houses, the department of Human Settlements mentioned that housing remains a big challenge for the entire nation.

During the meeting, the Executive Mayor, Mantlhameng Mahlangu, announced that the registration of houses had started in February 2010.

At the close of the meeting, community members were given the opportunity to make comments, complaints and suggestions and ask questions regarding their needs.

The main concerns to emerge at this meeting were unemployment, the lack of infrastructure in local areas, the shortage of houses, a lack of sports facilities for the youth, a shortage of staff at clinics, the need for more farming opportunities, services for mine villages, high crime rates and poor performance by learners.

The Executive Mayors, relevant councillors and officials responded to the questions.

Before presenting the 2009/10 projects Mayor Mashilo introduced a representative from the regional office of the Department of Home Affairs who spoke about the late registration of birth certificates and ID’s.

It was explained that the Minister has given them a deadline of end December 2010 when all late birth registration should be finalised.

With the local governmental election nearing, the department will bring the service closer to the people by visiting the wards and assisting them to obtain birth certificates and identity documents.

NEW PROJECTS
In the 2010/11 financial year, Nkangala District Municipality will provide funding for the following projects of the Steve Tshwete Municipality:

Water - an estimated R11 million has been budgeted to complete the 10 megalitre reservoir and the building of a second reservoir at Rockdale. Another R3 million has been budgeted to construct bulk water supply lines to the reservoirs mentioned and to the Rockdale township.

Sewerage - an estimated R2 million will be spent on the first phase of the Rockdale/ Nasaret outfall sewer line whilst another R4 million will be spent on the installation of biological toilets at Newtown.

The 2010/11 Review of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the Steve Tshwete Municipality was finally approved and adopted during a special council meeting held on 19 March at the municipality’s council chamber.

The community of Steve Tshwete is in the very fortunate position of making its needs known to the leadership and these are then taken into account when the annual municipal budget is prepared.

This is in line with the municipality’s stated vision of becoming the best local authority in the world in service delivery and its mission of commitment to the well being of all its citizens.

Ms Beatrice Maleka, the Manager responsible for the IDP explained that from September to October, IDP Review meetings had been held for the residents of the 24 wards of the municipality, at which members of the community re-prioritised their needs for the coming financial year.

From these inputs, a draft document was compiled and made available for public scrutiny from 10 February to 3 March this year.

The compilation of this important document follows a lengthy, inclusive process and is taken into account when the municipal budget for the 2010/11 financial year is prepared.

Various community structures sent their representatives to IDP forum meetings where the draft document was discussed, and the general public was able to scrutinize the document at various public venues, such as libraries. Their comments were submitted in writing. After this, the final document was compiled and adopted by Council,” Maleka explained.

The information contained in the document will be taken into account when the various Municipal departments compile their projects for the coming financial year for inclusion in the draft budget. These projects will, of course, be subject to financial constraints.

Maleka emphasized that the IDP should not be confused with the budget itself. “The IDP only informs the municipality and is used as a source of potential projects which the community has helped to identify and which can be translated into projects if funds are available.”

She added that the IDP also contained community needs that were outside the jurisdiction of the municipality and needed to be met by National and Provincial governments, for instance.

Private companies can also successfully fulfill their social responsibilities by visiting the IDP document to identify the needs of this municipality. This can afford them some tax relief should they undertake projects which are contained in the IDP.
**FACES OF COUNCILLORS**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Speaker: Ensures that council meetings are run according to legislation.

The Executive Mayor: Political Head of the municipality.

Chief Whip: Monitors councillors to ensure that they carry out their duties in a responsible manner.

**MMC:s** To ensure the implementation of mayoral committee and council resolutions by the respective departments. They are also allocated to attend IDP, LED, council, community and any indaba meetings.

**WARD COUNCILLORS**

Ward 1 - N Monareng
072 408 6478 - ANC.

Ward 2 - J Nkambule
073 047 5830 - ANC.

Ward 3 - L Mahlangu
072 320 1027 - ANC.

Ward 4 - NJ Mahlangu
073 569 7866 - ANC.

Ward 5 - TP Motau
083 627 7891 - Independent.

Ward 6 - B Simelane
082 900 1262 - Independent.

Ward 7 - MA Masina
083 629 9432 - ANC.

Ward 8 - MTE Mnguni
084 450 2868 - ANC.

Ward 9 - EP Nkosi
084 204 5572 - ANC.

Ward 10 - MA Masina
083 629 9432 - ANC.

Ward 11 - L Zweni
072 320 1027 - ANC.

Ward 12 - DA.

Ward 13 - JP Pretorius
072 474 4088 - DA.

Ward 14 - D Botes
083 362 370 - DA.

Ward 15 - T J Nkambule
083 629 9432 - ANC.

Ward 16 - B Nene
073 047 5830 - ANC.

Ward 17 - R Xaba
076 084 5918 - ANC.

Ward 18 - B Nene
073 047 5830 - ANC.

Ward 19 - MTE Mnguni
084 450 2868 - ANC.

Ward 20 - EF Mathibela
082 900 1266 - ANC.

Ward 21 - PR Sibanyoni
082 824 4896 - ANC.

Ward 22 - TJ Marothabula
082 900 1263 - ANC.

**Ward Councillor:** Responsible for each of the 24 wards in the municipality and grievances of residents through Ward Committee Meetings.
FACES OF COUNCILLORS

The Speaker: Ensures that council meetings are run according to legislation.

The Executive Mayor: Political Head of the municipality.

Chief Whip: Monitors councillors to ensure that they carry out their duties in a responsible manner.

Ward Councillor: Responsible for each of the 24 wards in the municipality and should listen to the needs and grievances of residents through Ward Committee Meetings, Ward and Community Meetings.

Proportional Councillors: Should attend Ward Committee Meetings, Ward Community Meetings and note the needs of residents.

MMC for Economic Development, Finance and Auditing: R Pholeta - ANC.

MMC for Administration, Human Resource and Education: AM Mabena - ANC.

Executive Mayor: IMT Mahlangu - ANC.

PR Cllr: KPJ Uys 072 381 8945 - FF.

PR Cllr: RMD Zulu 071 436 6339 - DA.

PR Cllr: ES Bassed 084 725 4404 - GMRA.

PR Cllr: LI Manzini 076 078 1268 - ANC.

PR Cllr: TD Skhosana 082 746 9410 - ANC.

PR Cllr: E du Toit 082 851 0312 - DA.

PR Cllr: AG Stroud 083 541 0777 - DA.

PR Cllr: H Knoesen 083 232 5585 - FF.

PR Cllr: CT Tonga 082 955 3014 - ANC.

PR Cllr: CA McFarlane 083 282 3659 - DA.

PR Cllr: MC Nkosi 076 040 9106 - DA.

PR Cllr: G Amoraal 073 302 5509 - DA.

PR Cllr: R Perumall 083 416 9148 - DA.

PR Cllr: RE Redman 083 350 1067 - DA.

PR Cllr: BH Mokoena 082 350 3574 - GMRA.

PR Cllr: KE Masilela 079 510 4088 - GMRA.

PR Cllr: JN Mgedeza 072 204 5053 - GMRA.

PR Cllr: AM Mabena 082 900 1398 - ANC.

PR Cllr: JB Mayaba 082 805 1644 - ANC.

PR Cllr: TR Mabanola 082 900 1255 - ANC.

PR Cllr: NE Kabini 082 746 9410 - ANC.

PR Cllr: CT Tonga 082 955 3014 - ANC.

PR Cllr: AM Mabena 082 900 1398 - ANC.

PR Cllr: MC Nkosi 076 040 9106 - DA.

MMC for Economic Development, Finance and Auditing: R Pholeta - ANC.

MMC for Administration, Human Resource and Education: AM Mabena - ANC.

Ward 22 - TJ Marotobolo 082 900 1263 - ANC.

Ward 23 - AS Grobler 076 830 3123 - DA.

Ward 24 - PJ Mahlangu 072 654 6095 - ANC.

Ward 14 - D Botes 083 262 370 - DA.

Ward 15 - HF Niemann 082 083 9763 - DA.

Ward 6 - B Simelane 082 900 1262 - Independent.

Ward 7 - MF Mahlangu 078 778 5578 - ANC.

Ward 8 - TM Masango 073 232 3053 - ANC.

Ward 16 - R Pilodia 082 415 8029 - ANC.