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NEWSLETTER

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Van die Burgemeester
From the Mayor

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Liewe Inwoners

In die Lord of the Rings boek, geskryf deur die Suid-Afrikaans gebore JRR Tolkien, sê die karakter Frodo aan die wyse grysaard Gandalf: ''I wish it need not have happened in my time", waarop Gandalf antwoord: ''... so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us". Dis wyse woorde en sekerlik hoe ons almal voel oor hierdie onverwagte pandemie wat ons wêreld getref het. Ons almal sou eerder die derde wêreldoorlog verwag het, maar hierdie pandemie tref wyer.

Die uitbreek en veral die vinnige verspreiding van die COVID-19 virus het die hele wêreld in 'n ongekende ramptoestand gedompel, die grootste noodtoestand sedert die tweede wêreld oorlog. Die hele wêreld het basies tot stilstand gekom en wêreldstede se strate lyk soos spookdorpe. Ons eie strate was vir weke doodstil, met net die persone wat deel is van noodsaaklike dienste.

Na meer as 'n maand was ek soos 'n graad 1 skoolkind, haastig dat die dag van normaliteit aanbreek. Die tyd van inperking was egter alles behalwe rustig en byna die hele munisipaliteit was deurlopend besig om stilweg te werk sodat dienste en ons normale primêre werkverrigtinge voortgaan. Dit het nogal 'n groot kopskuif en innoverende denke gevra om rondom hindernisse te werk waarmee ons nie normaalweg gekonfronteer word nie. En al is wonderlike tegnologiese dinge beskikbaar, het die ongewone werkwyse oor afstand en afsondering groot frustrasie veroorsaak. Vir my is die angswekkende besluite wat my elke nag wakker hou steeds wie moet werk en hoe moet ons dinge doen, want ek is immer bewus daarvan dat werkers besmet kan word en self kan sterf. Ek is ook intens bewus van die vernietigende effek wat hierdie ramp op ons besighede en dus die lewens van elke inwoner het.

Dear Residents,

In the book, the Lord of the Rings, written by the South African born JRR Tolkien, the character Frodo says to Gandalf the Grey: ''I wish it need not have happened in my time". Gandalf responds by saying ''... so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us". These are wise words and most probably how we all feel about this unexpected pandemic that affected the entire world. We would rather have expected the third world war, but the impact of this pandemic is felt much further.

The outbreak and rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus has thrown the entire world into a disaster situation of unknown proportions, the greatest emergency situation since the Second World War. The world has basically grinded to a halt and world cities look like ghost towns. Our own streets were quiet for weeks with only essential services people moving about.

After more than a month, I was like a first grader, in a hurry for the first day of normalcy to arrive. The lockdown period was anything but calm and almost the entire municipality was continuously working quietly to ensure that services and all our primary work continues without interruption. It required a major mental shift and innovative thinking to work around all the obstacles with which we weren't normally confronted. And even though we have various technological gadgets at our disposal, the unfamiliar way of working in isolation and over distances did result in great frustration. I am still kept awake every night by the by frightening decisions about who must work and how things must be done because I am very aware that our workers can become infected and even die. I am acutely aware of the devastating effect this disaster is having on our businesses and therefore the lives of every resident.

Within three days we had to make urgent and

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Met net 3 dae moes dringende en ingrypende besluite dus geneem word. Alhoewel daar druk was dat die Raadvergadering van 25 Maart uitgestel moes word, het ons voortgegaan in die stadsaal waar ons sosiale afstandbeheer kon toepas en met die nodige handreinigers om almal so veilig as moontlik te hou. Ons kon dus dringende items afhandel en het ook besluit om:

- 'n Uitsteltydperk in te stel in te stel vir eiendomsbelasting vanaf 1 April 2002 tot 30 Junie 2020.
- Geen rente of boetes sal gehef word op eiendomsbelastingsrekeninge vir die tyd (dit is onderworpe aan sekere kriteria, soos dit op die munisipale webblad verskyn)
- Die gratis watertoekenning aan die inwoners wat geregistreer is as hulpbehoewend sal verhoog word vanaf 6 tot 10 kiloliter vir die tydperk van 1 April 2020 tot 30 Junie 2020.
- Alle kredietbeheermaatreëls word tydelik opgeskort tot en met die einde van April 2020. Dit beteken dat water en/of elektrisiteitsmeters wat geblok was as gevolg van agterstallige rekeninge oopgestel sal word sodat inwoners elektrisiteit en water kan koop en oplaai sonder boetes gedurende die tyd.

Al die besonderhede oor hoe om aansoek te doen vir die uitsteltydperk is op ons munisipale webblad en inwoners word herinner dat daar sekere voorwaardes aan verbonde is. Vir meer inligting kan u 'n e-pos stuur na shaakir.fredericks@stellenbosch.gov.za of lazerick.anthony@stellenbosch.gov.za. U kan ook die volgende nommers skakel: 021 808 8554/8556.

Die Raad het ook die delegasies aan die Burgemeester verleen om besluite te neem tydens hierdie tydperk. Sommige opposisie lede was hierteen gekant, maar dit maak dit moontlik om nou besluite te neem wat nodig is soos die krisis ontvou.

Ek moes dus geld gaan soek in ons begroting om verskeie stappe te neem. Ons het byvoorbeeld 'n intense skoonmaakproses van stapel gestuur wat gefokus het op die reiniging en skoonmaak van veral openbare spasies wat op 'n daaglikse basis deur groot hoeveelhede mense gebruik word. Daar is veral gefokus op taxi-staanplekke, sypaadjies, strate, bankies en vullisdromme. En openbare toilette en so te verseker ons dorpe is skoner en veiliger van siektes vir ons inwoners.

Ons moes ook ingevolge die Covid Regulasies voorsiening maak vir hawelose mense in ons streek tydens die inperking. Met die hulp en bystand van verskeie organisasies het ons die hawelose mense tydelik in Klapmuts gehuisves in tente. Met die winterkoue en eerste reën moes hul verskuif word en word nou tydelik by die Van der Stel Sportgronde in Stellenbosch geakkommodeer. Daar kry hul kos, sekuriteit asook die mediese bystand vir die wat dit nodig gehad het en keer so dat hul rondsoek vir kos en die siekte opdoen of versprei.

Die ander kwesbare inwoners het egter ook hulp nodig in hierdie tyd. 'n Wonderlike vennootskap tussen die Munisipaliteit, die Universiteit, SCAN, Visit Stellenbosch, die Greater Stellenbosch Development Trust en verskeie nie-regeringsorganisasies in ons area is die #StellenboschUnite inisiatief gevorm. Die doel is om spesifiek te sorg vir kwesbare inwoners wat gedurende hierdie tyd hul inkomste verloor het. #StellenboschUnite het gehelp om kospakkies te voorsien aan families van regoor ons streek. Die krisis gaan egter nie gou wyk en armoede en werkloosheid gaan voortduur vir 'n baie lang tyd. Inwoners moet asseblief steeds 'n bydrae maak sodat ons kan aanhou om hulp te verleen. Die

profound decisions about how to manage this crisis. Although there was pressure to postpone the Council Meeting of 25 March, we went ahead with the meeting in the town hall and implemented social distancing and made hand sanitizers available to everyone to ensure everyone's safety as far as possible. We were able to deal with three urgent items and decided to do the following:

- A payment reprieve/holiday on property rates will be implemented from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020;
- No interest or penalties will be charged for property rates billed over this period (subject to criteria that is available on the municipal website);
- Free basic water allocation for indigent residents will be increased from 6 to 10 kilolitres per household from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020;
- A temporary suspension of all credit control measures and procedures will be implemented until the end of April 2020, meaning that all electricity meters that were blocked because of overdue accounts, will be unblocked and residents will be able to buy and upload electricity freely during this period.

All the details about how you must apply for this postponement period is on our municipal website and residents are reminded that there are certain terms and conditions which must be adhered to. For more information you can send an email to shaakir.fredericks@stellenbosch.gov.za or lazerick.anthony@stellenbosch.gov.za. You can also call the following number for information: 021 808 8554/8556.

The Council also gave delegation to the Mayor to make decisions during this time. Some opposition councillors opposed this, but this makes it possible to take important decisions during this crisis as it unfolds.

I therefore had to find money in our budget to take various actions. For example, we launched an intense cleaning process that focused specifically on public spaces that are used daily by large groups of people. We focussed on taxi ranks, sidewalks, streets, benches and rubbish bins as well as public toilettes and in that way we try to ensure that our towns are cleaner and safer for our residents.

In accordance with the COVID regulations we had to make provision for homeless people during the lockdown. With the help and assistance of various organisations we were able to temporarily accommodate the homeless people in tents in Klapmuts. With the first cold snaps of winter as well as the rain we had to move them and they are now temporarily housed at the Van Der Stel Sport grounds in Stellenbosch. They receive food and security as well as medical assistance for those who need it. This prevents them from having to move around to find food and in that way getting sick or distributing the disease.

The other vulnerable residents also need assistance during this time. By means of a wonderful partnership between the Municipality, the University, SCAN, Visit Stellenbosch the Greater Stellenbosch Development Trust and various other non-governmental organisations we were able to come together and form the #StellenboschUnite initiative. The purpose of this was to specifically take care of vulnerable residents who have lost their sources of income during this time. #StellenboschUnite helps to provide food parcels to

Greater Stellenbosch Development Trust administreer die donasies en u kan ons Facebook-blad of webblad besoek vir besonderhede of #StellenboschUnite se webblad ((https://stellenboschunite.org/).

Ek wil uit my hart dankie se vir elke organisasie en al die vrywilligers en mense wat skenkings gemaak het in die tyd. Ons mense se harte en hande het werklik oopgegaan en gehelp in die tyd van nood. Die leiers van hierdie organisasies en ons boere het ook ongelooflike bydraes gemaak en leierskap getoon. Ons sal vorentoe weer vir hulle bedank op 'n spesiale geleentheid.

Die Provinsiale Departement van Menslike Nedersettings het ons ook baie gehelp met die skenking van 20 groot watertenks wat ons in veral behoeftige gemeenskappe, insluitend Enkanini, Langerug, Meerlust en Watergang, geïnstalleer het om seker te maak al ons inwoners het toegang tot skoon water. Die tenks het 'n 5000 kiloliter kapasiteit en is toegerus met 5 krane elk. Die munisipaliteit maak daagliks die tenks vol en dit help ons om ons inwoners aan te moedig om goeie higiëniese praktyke toe te pas. Dit was egter skokkend dat ons waterbasisse en openbare toilette in Langrug vernietig is. Ons het 'n klagte by SAPS en die Menseregte Kommissie gemaak en ook 'n beloning ingestel vir inligting oor die misdadigers wat hierdie misdaad teen die mense gepleeg het, oënskynlik met die doel om mense te ontsê van sanitasiegeriewe. Enigiemand met inligting moet ons asseblief kontak. Informasie sal uiters vertroulik hanteer word.

Tydens die inperkingstyd het ons ook met groot skok en hartseer verneem van die afsterwe van ons vorige Burgemeester, Conrad Sidego.

Dit was my groot voorreg om Conrad as 'n kollega en vriend te ken. Tydens my Voorsitterskap op die Raad van Casidra 2009 tot 2010 was hy 'n baie aktiewe Raadslid. Ons was saam Burgemeesters tussen 2011 en 2016 en omdat ons bure was, het ons gereeld kontak gehad. Conrad was 'n merkwaardige man wat homself uit 'n nederige agtergrond tot groot sukses opgelig het. Wat 'n plesier was dit om na sy interessante stories te luister, altyd ingekleur met sy besondere humorsin.

Ten spyte van sy gesondheidsuitdagings was hy nooit negatief en het hy hier die fondasie gelê vir baie projekte en programme wat ons kon voltooi. Die deure wat hy oopgemaak het, soms afgebreek het omdat dit nodig was, om geleenthede te skep vir 'n beter Suid-Afrika, sal altyd deel wees van sy nalatenskap. Ons innige medelye gaan uit aan sy vrou en seuns in hierdie moeilike tyd.

Die moeilikste tyd in die Covid krisis lê nog voor. Ek worstel daagliks met die balans wat ons moet vind tussen die volhoubaarheid van die Munisipaliteit en die hulp wat ons mense en besighede nodig het. Mense verwag steeds topstandaarde in dienslewering, tog kan baie mense nie hul rekeninge betaal nie. Ons inwoners is meestal verantwoordelik en betaal soveel hul kan en ek wil elkeen loof en bedank daarvoor. Enkeles is egter onverantwoordelik en het net opgehou betaal, sonder om reëlings te tref. Ek wil vra dat almal asseblief die finansies afdeling kontak en reël hoe u u rekening gaan bestuur. Die amptenare is versoek om alle versoeke met empatie te hanteer en dit so moontlik te maak dat ons weer die ekonomie kan herbou. Die realiteit is egter dat sou ons nie genoegsaam geld inkry nie, ons nie meer dienste op dieselfde standaard kan lewer nie.

Mense vra dikwels vir my wat was die lekker en die slegte ervarings in hierdie tyd.

Wat my boos gemaak het in hierdie tyd in besonder is die

families from across our entire region. This crisis is not going away anytime soon and the ensuing poverty and joblessness will continue for a long time. Residents must please make a contribution so that we can continue to render assistance to those who need it. The Greater Stellenbosch Development Trust administrates the donations and you can find all the information on our Facebook page, our website or the #StellenboschUnite website (https://stellenboschunite.org/).

From the bottom of my heart, thank you to every organisation and all the volunteers and people who have contributed during this time. The hands and hearts of our people have truly opened and made a difference in time of great need. The leaders of these organisations as well as our farmers also made wonderful contributions and have shown great leadership. We will thank them again in future on a special occasion.

The Provincial Department of Human Settlements also assisted us by donating 20 large water tanks that we installed in deprived communities including Enkanini, Langrug, Meerlust and Watergang. These tanks ensured access to clean water for all our residents. The tanks have a 5000 litre capacity and are equipped with 5 taps. The municipality fills the tanks daily. It was however shocking to learn that some of the stands and public toilets in Langrug were destroyed. We opened a case at the SAPS as well as with the Human Rights commission and a reward is available for information that can lead to the apprehension of these criminals. They committed crimes against our residents with the apparent goal of preventing our residents from having access to sanitation services. If you have any information, please contact us. All information will be treated as confidential.

During this lockdown period we learned with great shock and sadness that our previous Mayor, Conrad Sidego, has passed away.

It was my privilege to know Conrad as a colleague and friend. During my time as chairperson of Casidra from 2009 to 2010, he was a very active council member. We were mayors together between 2011 and 2016 and because we were neighbours, we had regular contact. Conrad was an impressive man who came from humble beginnings and raised himself up to great success. What a pleasure it was to listen to his interesting stories, illustrated by his unique sense of humour.

Even though he faced serious health issues, he was never negative and he laid the foundation for key projects and programmes that we can complete today. The doors he opened, sometimes with force because it was necessary, was done to create a better South Africa for all and will always be part of his legacy. Our condolences to his wife and sons during this difficult time.

The most difficult part of this COVID crisis is still ahead. I am struggling every day to find the balance between sustainability of the Municipality and the assistance of our people and businesses in need. People still expect quality service delivery and many people simply cannot pay their bills. The majority of our residents are responsible and pay as they can afford. I want to thank you for that. There are however some exceptions where people have stopped paying without making any arrangements with us. I want to ask everyone to please contact our financial services section and make arrangements for how you want to manage your accounts. Our officials have been asked to handle all requests with empathy and in that way to make it possible for us to rebuild our economy. The reality is however that if we do not receive sufficient funds we will not be able to deliver the same level of quality services.

onnodige storting van vullis oraloor wat lei tot duur herwinning, negatiewe mense wat net kritiseer, politieke opportunisme, onrealistiese verwagtinge asof geld aan ons akkerbome groei, vandalisme en ongehoorsame mense wat die tuisbly reëls verontagsaam en so ander mense in gevaar stel.

Wat my ongelooflik dankbaar en nederig gemaak het, was die begrip en ondersteuning van feitlik al ons inwoners, die gehoorsaamheid te spyte van vernietigende ekonomiese gevolge, die tuisbly in moeilike omstandighede, die duisende bemoedigende boodskappies en raad van inwoners en die terugkeer van die natuur terwyl daar min mense is. Om wildsbokkies te sien wei langs ons strate was iets wat ek nooit sal vergeet nie. Die lang ure van werk was soms moeilik, maar die besef dat ons gemeenskap kyk na die wat swaarkry en die besef dat ons steeds 'n klein hegte gemeenskap is ten spyte van ons moderne samelewing, was 'n besondere ervaring. Ek wil onvoorwaardelik dankie se vir hierdie wonderlike ervaring in my lewe. So 'n ervaring kom nie dikwels oor ons pad nie en dis eintlik 'n voorreg om so 'n ervaring deur te maak. Vir my as Burgemeester was dit absoluut lewensverrykend as gevolg van u almal se bystand, begrip en liefde. Baie dankie dat u so 'n wonderlike gemeenskap is. Ek bid elke dag vir elkeen van u en u families. Mag ons hierdie krisis met min skade ontkom.

Ek wil dankie sê aan al ons eie personeel wat so hard gewerk het gedurende die inperkingstyd. Niks was ooit te veel moeite of te gevaarlik vir hulle nie. Dankie ook aan al die gesondheidspersoneel, wetstoepassers en winkelpersoneel wat gehelp het om ons veilig te hou, gesond te hou en aan die gang te hou gedurende die tyd. Julle het reuse opofferings gemaak om ons gemeenskappe te dien en namens die hele raad en die hele Stellenbosch, baie dankie!

Die heilige maand van Ramadan het weer begin op 23 April. Ek wil graag die geleentheid gebruik om namens die Munisipaliteit aan al ons Moslem inwoners en personeel 'n geseënde Ramadan toe te wens. Mag dit 'n tyd van verdieping en gebed vir u wees.

Daar lê nog 'n lang en uitdagende tyd vir ons almal voor. Die ingeligtes reken die piek van die siekte gaan eers in September wees. Vir die voorsienbare toekoms gaan ons die rieme maar moet dun sny. Die ekonomiese krisis wat ontstaan het as gevolg van COVID-19, het Suid-Afrika en ons Munisipaliteit baie hard getref omdat ons so 'n sterk toerisme bedryf het. Ons kan seker wees ons sal egter alles binne ons vermoë doen om u te help en by te staan. Ek vra dat u asseblief my hand neem en dat ons saam opstaan en vorentoe stap.

Vir solank dit nog nodig bly tuis waar moontlik en hou u sosiale afstand en was u hande gereeld!

Veilig bly.

Groete tot volgende keer!

Beste Wense
Burgemeester Gesie

People often ask me what was the best and the worst experiences during this time.

What made me really angry during this time was the unnecessary illegal dumping of rubbish that resulted in expensive cleaning operations, people who only criticised, political opportunism, unrealistic expectations - as if money grew on our oak trees, vandalism and people who ignored the stay at home order and endangered others through this action.

What made me incredible grateful and humble were the understanding and support from just about all our residents, the obedience in spite of the serious economic consequences, the staying at home in difficult circumstances, the thousands of encouraging messages and advice from residents and the return of nature during this time where there were few people about. To see an antelope graze in our streets was something I will never forget. The long hours were difficult but the knowledge that our community was looking out for those in need and the realisation that we are still a small tightknit community despite the modern world around us was a positive experience. I am unconditionally grateful for this experience in my life. An experience like this does not often come across our paths and it was a privilege to live through it. For me as Mayor, it was an absolutely enriching experience because of all the support, understanding and love. Thank you to our wonderful community. I pray every day for each and every one of you and your families. May we come through this crisis with little damage.

I want to thank our own staff who worked so hard during this lockdown period. Nothing was ever too much effort or too dangerous. Thank you to all the health staff, law enforcement officials and supermarket staff who helped to keep us safe, healthy and functioning during this time. You have made huge sacrifices to serve our community and on behalf of the entire council and the greater Stellenbosch, thank you very much!

The holy month of Ramadaan starts on 23 April. I want to use the opportunity, on behalf of the Municipality, to wish our Muslim residents and staff a blessed Ramadan. May it be a time of reflection and blessings.

There is still a long and challenging time ahead for all of us. Experts say that the peak of this disease will only be in September. For the foreseeable future we will have to be very frugal. The economic crisis, as a result of COVID-19, has hit South Africa and our municipality very hard because we have a strong tourism industry. You can be sure however that we will do everything in our power to assist and help you. I ask that you please take my hand and that we tackle the challenges ahead together.

For as long as it is necessary and possible, please stay home and continue social distancing and wash your hands regularly.

Stay Safe.

Best Wishes
Mayor Gesie