



AM AHLATHI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 2025





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AM AHLATHI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AM AHLATHI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY CELEBRATES HERITAGE MONTH IN GASELA



The Amahlathi Local Municipality, in collaboration with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, hosted a vibrant event in the Gasela to celebrate Heritage Month honouring African customs, culture and traditions.

The celebration aimed to preserve and promote indigenous heritage by creating a platform where local communities, especially the youth, could actively participate in cultural expression and learning. The event featured a rich showcase of traditional games, dances, art exhibitions and handcrafted works, offering attendees an immersive experience into the diverse cultural practices of the region.



Youth were given the opportunity to display their talents while also learning about the value of ancestral traditions. Through interactive performances and storytelling, the event emphasised the importance of cultural preservation in shaping identity and fostering community pride.



This initiative forms part of the government's broader mission to build a society that is conscious of its historical roots and proud of its heritage. The Amahlathi Municipality reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with relevant government departments to ensure that African customs and traditions are protected and passed down to future generations.

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100 DAY GBVF CHALLENGE

In a powerful display of community solidarity, the Ikhwezi Women's Centre recently hosted a significant Women's Day campaign, marking a pivotal moment in the local fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).

The event, staged as a key part of the national 100 Day GBVF Challenge, brought together a united front of essential services to forge a stronger, survivor-centred network of support within the Amahlathi Local Municipality.

Gone are the days of working in silos. The campaign's core strength lay in its collaborative, multi sectoral approach, intentionally gathering the very pillars of support that survivors need to navigate their journey to safety and justice. The event served as a public pledge from each stakeholder, clearly outlining their role in the ecosystem of care.

Attendees heard directly from key agencies, each detailing their critical function.

South African Police Service (SAPS) emphasised their commitment to protecting victims, explained the process of reporting cases and obtaining protection orders and stressed the importance of evidence collection for successful prosecution.

Department of Justice & Constitutional Development, explained the legal process for survivors, outlining the court procedures and the support available to ensure their rights are upheld and their voices are heard.

Department of Health, detailed the crucial medical services available, including immediate trauma care, confidential forensic examinations and preventative healthcare to protect survivors' well being.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS), highlighted their role as first responders, ensuring the rapid and safe transportation of survivors to medical facilities for urgent care during critical moments.

Amahlathi Special Programs Unit (SPU), outlined the ongoing support, counselling and shelter referral services available, focusing on the long-term healing of survivors.

This initiative went beyond simply raising awareness. By placing all these services side-by-side, the Ikhwezi Women's Centre facilitated a conversation about community accountability.

The message was clear, ending GBVF is not just the responsibility of the police or social workers; it is a collective duty.

The campaign aligns perfectly with the spirit of the 100 Day GBVF Challenge, a national call to action that encourages tangible, community driven efforts over a focused period.

The event concluded with a shared resolve to continue this collaborative spirit. By prioritising survivor centred action and fostering an environment where victims are believed and supported, the community of Amahlathi is taking significant strides toward creating a safer, more inclusive environment for all its women and girls.

AM AHLATHI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IS PARTICIPATING IN THE 6TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Amahlathi Local Municipality is actively participating in the 6th Global Conference on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the University of Giessen, Germany. This forms as part of the SDG Nexus Network's efforts to advance the UN's 2030 Agenda.

Alongside Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality from South Africa's Eastern Cape and Lamspringe Municipality from Lower Saxony, Germany, Amahlathi LM is engaging in this global platform to foster partnerships focused on Agriculture, Forestry, Waste Management, Youth Development through learner exchange and Tourism.

Facilitated by the Eastern Cape Office of the Premier, this opportunity enables Amahlathi to collaborate with German counterparts, aligning local initiatives with global sustainability goals.

The focus areas of this partnership align with key SDGs.

Agriculture that supports SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) through sustainable farming practices, addressing food security in Amahlathi's rural communities.

Forestry that contributes to SDG 15 (Life on Land) by promoting sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.

Waste Management that aligns with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), leveraging Germany's expertise in recycling and circular economy models.

Youth Development that advances SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) via learner exchanges that build cross-cultural skills and global awareness.

Tourism that supports SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by promoting Eastern Cape's cultural and natural attractions, drawing on sustainable tourism practices from Lamspringe.

The Eastern Cape Office of the Premier has been instrumental in securing Amahlathi LM's participation, enabling the municipality to seize this opportunity for international collaboration.

This reflects a commitment to SDG 17, fostering global partnerships to address local challenges like poverty and unemployment through knowledge exchange and innovation.

Amahlathi's participation in the 6th Global Conference positions it to drive sustainable development in the Eastern Cape while contributing to global SDG goals.



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ARBOR DAY

Amahlathi Local Municipality celebrated Arbor Month at Ulana Agricultural School in Keiskammahoek, under the theme “My Tree, My Oxygen, Plant Yours Today,” blending heritage, education and environmental care.

The event was especially significant as Ulana marked its 52nd anniversary, honoring its founder, Mr Kwinana, a revered figure in education and community development. The school’s name ties to Keiskammahoek’s rich cultural traditions, highlighting the link between heritage and environmental responsibility during Heritage Month.

The event, in partnership with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and Ngamile Environmental Forestry Consulting, emphasised unity in tackling environmental challenges.

A key highlight was the tree planting ceremony, where attendees planted indigenous Spekboom (Gqwanitsha) in tribute to Mr Kwinana, symbolising resilience and growth.

Mr Ngamile, founder of Ngamile Environmental Forestry Consulting, concluded with the powerful message, “Tree planting is not a choice, it is a necessity,” echoing the words of a wise elder. He reminded everyone, “We don’t inherit the world from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”

As the sun set, the newly planted Gqwanitsha trees stood as symbols of hope, rooted in history and growing toward a sustainable future.



STUTTERHEIM MASTER AND PRECINCT PLAN

As part of Goal 1 ,Social Sustainability under the broader vision of the Stutterheim Master Precinct Plan, a local initiative is making meaningful strides in transforming lives by equipping community members with practical, income generating skills.

This skills development program, introduced as a cornerstone of Stutterheim's revitalisation strategy, aims to tackle unemployment, promote economic inclusion and foster local entrepreneurship. By creating access to hands on training, mentorship and startup support, the project empowers individuals particularly youth and women to build sustainable livelihoods right within their own communities.

The training focused on leather crafting and cosmetics production. These two focus areas were strategically selected for their accessibility, market potential and alignment with local resources and talents.

Leather Crafting, from wallets to handbags, leather goods are in high demand both locally and beyond. Participants are taught everything from the basics of leatherwork to advanced techniques, enabling them to produce high quality, sellable products.

Cosmetics Production,with increasing awareness around self care and natural beauty, cosmetics present a promising avenue for small business development.

Trainees learn to make soaps, lotions and other skincare products using locally sourced ingredients, with an emphasis on sustainability and branding.

The initiative doesn't just stop at training. Participants are also supported in accessing local markets, developing their own product lines and even starting cooperatives or small businesses.

This approach aligns with the Amahlathi Municipality's commitment to longterm economic resilience and inclusive growth.

By investing in people and their potential, the project serves as a model of community led development, one that uplifts individuals while contributing to the collective well being of Stutterheim.

This initiative reflects the principles of social sustainability outlined in the Stutterheim Master Precinct Plan, emphasising human development, equity and resilience.

It's about more than just job creation it's about restoring dignity, fostering innovation and building a thriving local economy from the ground up.

The leather crafting and cosmetics production program is a powerful reminder that with the right tools, training and support, communities can create their own solutions and shape their own futures.



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DOHNE AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE OPEN DAY

Agriculture took centre stage at the Dohne Agricultural Institute Open Day, hosted in partnership with the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture and the Amahlathi Local Municipality.

Held in Stutterheim, the event brought together farmers, learners, scientists and universities to highlight the sector's growing role in the province's economy.

Clear skies and a vibrant programme set the tone for the day, which featured live demonstrations in animal production, crop management and hydroponics, along with the unveiling of a new Aquaculture Demonstration Facility aimed at boosting fish farming and rural skills development.

MEC Nonceba Kontsiwe delivered a strong message, "Given the unfortunate job losses in the automotive sector, we said the mine we have is the land." She affirmed agriculture's central place in the province's development strategy and urged youth to see it as a career of the future.

Learners explored careers in agriculture through a career expo, with Grade 11 student Ayabonga Waphi calling the experience "mesmerising." "Now I know agriculture feeds not just you, but the nation," he said.

The event also welcomed academic institutions including Rhodes University, University of Fort Hare, North West University and Walter Sisulu University, who showcased their agricultural research alongside Dohne scientists. Portfolio Committee Chairperson DR Fundisile Bese called for deeper collaboration across sectors, saying, "We must put agriculture at the centre of development."

MEC Kontsiwe expressed her intention to make the Open Day an annual event, underlining the department's commitment to food security, youth empowerment and economic growth through agriculture.

BONZ INVESTMENT BUILDS NEW HOME FOR 103 YEAR OLD MAMA NOYHO PALAFINI

In a true act of Ubuntu, Bonz Investment has stepped in to restore dignity and hope to 103-year-old Mama Noyho Elsie Palafini, a beloved elder from Khubusi Village whose living conditions recently touched the hearts of many.

Her story came to light during a Mandela Day outreach earlier this year, when Amahlathi Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr. Nomakosazana Nogqayi, visited her home. The mayor was deeply moved by the difficult circumstances Mama Noyho was living under, conditions unbefitting anyone, let alone a woman of her age.

Motivated by compassion, the mayor made a public appeal for help, vowing to find a Good Samaritan who could bring change.

That call was answered by Bonz Investment.

In a remarkable gesture, the company has committed to building Mama Noyho a brand new home from the ground up. During a recent site visit, the Bonz Investment team not only assessed the land for construction but also delivered essential groceries and supplies to the family. The visit was emotional a day filled with tears, joy and renewed hope.

"This is more than charity, it's an act of humanity," said Mayor Nogqayi. "This government cares deeply for its people and we are proud to work hand in hand with stakeholders like Bonz Investment to bring dignity and change to our communities." The house, set to be completed before Christmas, will offer Mama Noyho a warm, safe and dignified place to call home. It's a powerful reminder of what's possible when businesses, communities and government come together for a common good.

What began as a routine visit has become a life changing moment not just for Mama Noyho, but for the entire village of Khubusi. Her story now stands as a symbol of compassion in action and the enduring spirit of Ubuntu.



2025 NESI ANNUAL EVENT



Today the community of Ndakana came together to celebrate the 8th Ndakana Educational Support Initiative (NESI) Annual Event, a remarkable initiative driven by former learners of Ndakana schools who are committed to giving back and empowering the next generation.

This year's event was marked by several meaningful activities, including the unveiling of the Thanduxolo Primary School plaque, a symbolic moment highlighting the legacy of education in the area. The handover of school uniforms, netball kits and dignitary packs to the learners of Thanduxolo Primary School, a gesture of care and investment in the children's educational journey and well being.

Among the dignitaries present was Mayor Nomakosazana Nongqayi, who delivered an inspiring message of support. She commended the work of Mr Lindile Yiwani and NESI, urging other communities to follow this example of collaborative development.

"Let's uplift and empower our learners together," the Mayor said. "Partnerships like these are essential, especially when working with limited resources. Together, we can do more."

She reaffirmed the municipality's commitment to working hand in hand with NESI and sector departments, particularly in planning for a multi purpose community centre and expressed enthusiasm for larger projects such as the development of a TVET college and a shopping mall to boost local employment.

The Mayor also outlined several impactful municipal initiatives, that were initiated by the responsible councillor Cllr Nqini that include free computer classes for Grade 12 learners, with the provision of take home computers for tertiary studies. Free driver's license training for youth (10 beneficiaries so far). Training programs in animal and crop production, aiming to leverage local land for agricultural development.

Princess Ntombekhaya Sandile, representing the House of Traditional Leadership, reiterated the importance of cultural preservation. She emphasised continued support for developmental programs and the significance of virginity ceremonies in maintaining community heritage. "We may not have much, but we will always support initiatives that bring growth," she said.

Professor George Tsibani, author of the Nation Building Plan, called for the revitalisation of local malls in Stutterheim and the attraction of investors to the Amahlathi region. He advocated for collaboration with other municipalities to unlock additional funding and proposed transforming Amahlathi into a center of excellence in agricultural land development.

He also addressed parents directly, saying "Do not expose your children to alcohol protect their future. They have every opportunity to achieve their dreams."

The event closed with heartfelt thanks to the teachers of Ndakana, community members and political parties for their ongoing commitment to shaping the future of local children.



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WARD COMMITTEE TRAINING

Through the Office of the Speaker, Amahlathi Local Municipality hosted a two-day Ward Committee training session in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). The training focused on the roles and responsibilities of Ward Committees, the relevant legislation and policies governing their work and the importance of public participation in local governance.

AM AHLATHI FARMERS SHINE AT EASTERN CAPE AGRICULTURE SHOW

Farmers from the Amahlathi region proudly took center stage at the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture's Annual Agricultural Show, held at the Bisho Showgrounds. Their vibrant stalls showcased a variety of fresh vegetables, processed goods, jam-making skills, and traditional attire—all locally produced and reflecting the rich agricultural and cultural heritage of their communities.

The event, which attracted over 150 farmers from across the province, was officially opened by MEC Nonceba Kotsiwe, with Transport MEC Xolile Nqatha also in attendance.

One of the exhibitors, Mr Mninawa Matiwane, a vegetable producer from the Zanyokwe Irrigation Scheme, praised the event as a vital marketing opportunity.

"When we heard the call from the MEC of Agriculture, we made sure to be here today to showcase what we do so that markets like BCM Fresh Produce and Boxer can see the quality of our produce," he said.

Matiwane emphasised the value of engaging with key stakeholders, including the Buffalo City Fresh Produce Market and other potential buyers.

The agricultural show is part of a broader initiative to promote market access and business opportunities for smallholder farmers. It serves as a platform for producers to network with industry players, buyers and support organisations.

To boost the agricultural sector, the department has partnered with key stakeholders, including the Buffalo City Municipality Fresh Produce Market, Eastern Cape Development Corporation, Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and the Amathole District Municipality.

Looking ahead, the department aims to host four agricultural shows annually, one per quarter to empower smallholder farmers and support sustainable agricultural development across the province.



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EMPOWERING WOMEN IN TOURISM: A STEP TOWARDS INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

To celebrate Women's Month, Amahlathi Local Municipality partnered with the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT) to host the Women in Tourism Empowerment Workshop. The event aimed to uplift women, youth and the elderly in the tourism and agriculture sectors.

The workshop offered a platform to educate and empower participants. It focused on tourism business development, agri-tourism and traditional crafting. Attendees also learned about funding and training opportunities to help them start and grow their businesses in the local and wider tourism economy.

Several government departments and agencies supported the event. These included the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture (DSRAC), Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA), Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR), Eastern Cape Provincial Arts and Culture Council (ECPACC), Department of Agriculture, and the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC). Each played a key role by sharing resources, advice, and support systems.

The Women in Tourism Empowerment Workshop reflects a strong commitment to gender equality, sustainable development and community growth through tourism. It's a meaningful step toward unlocking the potential of women and marginalised groups in the Eastern Cape and beyond.



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ENGAGEMENT SESSION ON LAND ACCESS



Today, farmers in Amahlathi met with the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Hon Mzwanele Nyhontso, to discuss land access. The engagement was held at the Zanyokwe Farmer Production Support Unit (FPSU) in Keiskammahoek.

Amahlathi Mayor, Cllr Nomakosazana Nongqayi, opened the session with a welcoming speech. She said she was excited and hopeful about progress in land reform, “I feel hopeful today, as we move closer to a better life for all. I’ve seen the Minister’s commitment to resolving land issues, which remain sensitive and important.”

The Mayor referred to the Minister’s Budget Vote 42 speech on 10 July 2025, praising his consistency. She also reminded attendees of Vision 2030, adopted in 2012, which aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. Land access is a key part of that plan.

“The land question is central to our history and struggle. We must use land to build a fair and just society,” she said.

She closed by encouraging landowners to be active, “If you have land, work it. If you don’t want to work it, lease it to someone who will. Let’s feed the nation.”

Minister Mzwanele Nyhontso then addressed the crowd. He listened to concerns and promised action, “I’m not here for fame, I’m here to solve problems and ensure payments are made.”

He also emphasised support for women applicants, especially during Women’s Month and said their applications must be prioritised.

Empowering Women in Tourism: A Step Toward Inclusive Economic Growth

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READING AWARENESS PROGRAM



Amahlathi Local Municipality was honoured to welcome the return of renowned actress, writer and life coach Nomasebe Andrea Dondolo. Widely recognised for her current role as MaGaba in the popular telenovela Inimba, which airs on Mzansi Magic (DStv channel 161) every weekday at 21:00, Dondolo continues to make an impact beyond the screen.

Her recent visit forms part of the build up to Heritage Month celebrations in September and reflects her ongoing dedication to cultural preservation and community development. This engagement follows an earlier visit earlier this year, during which she introduced several community upliftment initiatives and held discussions with the Local Economic Development (LED) unit.

As part of her latest engagement, Dondolo proudly showcased her published books, further highlighting her passion for storytelling, education and empowerment. In a symbolic gesture of support, Municipal Manager Dr Shasha and Director of Local Economic Development Mr Mnweba purchased copies, underscoring the Municipality's commitment to promoting literacy and nurturing local talent.

Amahlathi Local Municipality is excited about the potential for future collaborations with Dondolo. Through joint initiatives as Amahlathi local municipality, we aim to continue inspiring and empowering our communities while celebrating and preserving our rich cultural heritage.



AM AHLATHI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY



In celebration of International Literacy Day, the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, in partnership with Amahlathi Local Municipality, hosted a vibrant event at Mzwandile Fanti Recreational Centre in Stutterheim. The event was held under the global theme, *"Promoting Literacy for a World in Transition: Building the Foundation for Sustainable and Peaceful Societies."*

The event brought together school learners, elderly people, people with disabilities and local librarians. It was a day dedicated to showcasing the transformative power of literacy in an evolving world. As part of the day's activities, learners participated in book reviews and reading competitions. They demonstrated their growing reading and comprehension skills.

In the spirit of intergenerational learning, older persons and participants with disabilities joined a lively general knowledge quiz. This reinforced the message that literacy is a lifelong journey accessible to all.

The celebration concluded on a cultural high note. Local librarians competed in a spirited contest focused on Amaqhalo nezaci (isiXhosa idioms and proverbs). This emphasised the richness of indigenous languages and the importance of preserving oral traditions.

Proclaimed by UNESCO in 1966, International Literacy Day is observed annually on 8 September. It reaffirms literacy as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies.

This year's theme speaks to the challenges and opportunities of global transitions. It underscores literacy's role in fostering dignity, empowerment and active citizenship. Importantly, the event also aimed to acknowledge and address historical barriers to education. These especially affected women and persons with disabilities due to poverty and discrimination.

Their active participation in the day's activities reflects ongoing efforts to promote equal access to learning. It also supports the goal of building a more inclusive society.

This celebration forms part of the broader District Library Awareness Programme. The programme is committed to promoting literacy, education and inclusive development across all communities.



AM AHLATHI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AM AHLATHI COMMEMORATES NELSON MANDELA DAY WITH ACTS OF SERVICE AND COMPASSION



LAND CLAIMS IMBIZO

Today, the Minister of Land Reform and Agrarian Reform, Mr Mzwanele Nyhontso together with the MEC for Agriculture, Ms Nonceba Kontsiwe and Amahlathi Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr Nomakosazana Nongqayi, hosted a Land Claims Imbizo in Stutterheim, Amahlathi.

The engagement served as a vital platform to provide clarity on the status of land claims particularly the 260 claims submitted from the Amahlathi area. It also offered land claimants the opportunity to ask questions about their individual claims and receive updates on the expected timelines for payment.

This engagement marked a collaborative partnership between Amahlathi Local Municipality and other key stakeholders to ensure that land restitution is implemented in an integrated and inclusive manner that involves all relevant role players.

It also served to educate the Amahlathi community, empowering them with information on both old order and new order claims information that will assist them in effectively communicating with their communities and other beneficiaries of the restitution programme.



Under the theme "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity," Amahlathi Local Municipality joined the nation in celebrating the legacy of Tata Nelson Mandela on his birthday. Embracing his spirit of unity and ubuntu, the municipality marked the day with impactful acts of service and care.

The commemorations began with 67 minutes of service, where volunteers gathered to clean and paint a child-headed household. Alongside this effort, the family received a donation of groceries to support their basic needs, a gesture underscoring the essence of Mandela Day: dignity, compassion, and shared humanity.

This year's celebrations were held across three key areas within Amahlathi: Mlungisi Township, Kubusie Greenfields, and Phumlani in Keiskammahoek.

In Mlungisi Township, elderly residents were embraced with warmth and care as part of the Mayor's Blanket Drive, where cozy blankets were handed out to help them face the winter chill with comfort and dignity.

In Keiskammahoek, elderly community members were also not forgotten they, too, received warm blankets from the Amahlathi Mayor, extending compassion and care to yet another corner of the municipality.

In Kubusie, two special gestures touched hearts and lives. A 103 year-old resident, Noyho Elsie Palafani, was visited and gifted with groceries in celebration of her life and resilience. In the same area, Akhona Stemele received a wheelchair, bringing not just physical mobility but renewed hope and dignity.

Addressing the community, Mayor Nomakosazana Nongqayi invoked the timeless wisdom of Tata Mandela:

"Madiba taught us that we must care for one another and extend a helping hand wherever we can. It is through these small acts of kindness that we truly change lives."

She further reminded the crowd of Mandela's deep love for children, whom he always referred to as the future leaders of the nation.

"As Amahlathi Municipality, we must lead by example and live the values Tata Madiba stood for. We want to hear children say: 'Our lives changed during the commemoration of Tata Mandela.' That is how we honour his memory, not just through words, but through action."

We are also deeply grateful to our generous sponsors who made this day a success. To mention just a few: Engen Stutterheim (owned by Imperium Developments), Meat Lovers, Pick n Pay, Build It and Mr Xulu from Chartall Creations thank you for standing with us in service of our communities.

This year's programme was made even more meaningful through our partnership with MEC Xolile Nqatha, a proud son of Mlungisi, whose commitment to community upliftment continues to inspire.

Through these heartfelt efforts, Amahlathi reaffirmed that Mandela's legacy lives on, in every act of kindness, every life uplifted and every community strengthened.



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VISION

A resilient, sustainable and people central local municipality

MISSION

A model municipality in partnership with its community through quality service delivery local economic development and public participation

VALUES

Accountability
Model
Accessibility
Healthy
Loyalty
Authentic
Trust
Honesty
Integrity

