



16 May 2026

Ms A Vorster
The Municipal Manager
Municipality of Swellendam
Swellendam
6740

Cc: The Speaker, The Executive Mayor, MEC Anton Bredell (Western Cape Department of Local Government)

SPARC SUBMISSION ON THE SECTION 78 FEASIBILITY STUDY: SWELLENDAM CARAVAN PARK (PHASE 1)

Summary

SPARC has reviewed the Phase 1 Section 78 Feasibility Study on the Swellendam Caravan Park and submits the following comments in the public interest and on the public record.

The Swellendam Caravan Park is a 65-year-old community asset on 2.36 hectares of in-town land at the foot of the Langeberg mountains, within walking distance of the Drostdy and adjacent to the Marloth Nature Reserve, in one of the most heritage-significant parts of one of South Africa's oldest towns. The Glen stream runs through the property. The site is zoned Resort Zone, sits within the Conservation Area Overlay Zone, and is surrounded by some of Swellendam's most significant heritage sites. It has served generations of Swellendammers and visitors to the town.

At the heart of this submission is one central observation. The municipality is being asked to make a permanent and irreversible decision about a unique and irreplaceable in-town public asset, on the basis of a Phase 1 report that has not properly assessed the alternatives. Land of this kind comes onto the municipal balance sheet once and stays there unless disposed of. Once sold, it cannot be re-acquired by

SMA (Swellendam Municipal Area)

Barrydale + Buffelsjags + Malgas + Stormsvlei + Suurbraak + Swellendam

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the municipality. There is no equivalent site available. Disposal therefore forecloses, permanently, every option for every future council. Every alternative arrangement available under the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, including long-term lease, concession, community trust or cooperative, public-private partnership, and municipal entity, preserves the asset and keeps future options open. Retention in any form preserves municipal optionality. Disposal surrenders it forever.

The decision before the municipality is therefore not "what is the best thing to do with this facility right now." It is "what is the best thing to do with this facility right now while preserving the ability of future councils to choose differently as circumstances change." The proper answer to the second question, given irreversibility, can only be a Section 76 mechanism that retains the underlying asset.

We accept that disposal could, in principle, become appropriate if a full Section 78 assessment honestly demonstrates that no retention-based mechanism is viable. Our concern is not with the possibility of disposal as such, but with a process that appears to be moving toward disposal before that assessment has been properly conducted.

Our concerns with the Phase 1 report are both procedural and substantive, and they are submitted in the long-term interest of the town and its community. In summary, we find that:

1. The Phase 1 report omits the majority of legitimate Section 76 service delivery mechanisms entirely. It considers only continued municipal management or two forms of sale. Alternatives such as long-term lease with retained ownership, concession arrangements, community trust or cooperative models, public-private partnerships, and municipal entity structures are not assessed at all. We respectfully submit that Section 78(1) and 78(2) of the Systems Act require these alternatives to be assessed before disposal can be properly considered, and the Phase 1 report appears not to satisfy that requirement.
2. The caravan park serves community functions that go beyond tourism. These include affordable long-stay accommodation for pensioners and residents in transition, retiree access through municipal discounts, a place that residents from across Swellendam itself use for special occasions, family gatherings, and day visits, the town's hosting capacity for the wide range of visitors who serve municipal and community life, and emergency contingency capacity demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. These functions are not adequately served by any other accommodation option in Swellendam, and they exist *because* the caravan park is a public service, not despite it.
3. The site falls within the Swellendam Conservation Area Overlay Zone established under the municipality's own Integrated Zoning Scheme By-Law, 2020. The Phase 1 report does not acknowledge this. The implications under the by-law and the National Heritage Resources Act are significant and have not been assessed.
4. Any disposal for residential, hospitality, or commercial development would require rezoning or consent use, given that the site is currently zoned Resort Zone. The Phase 1 report does not engage with this requirement. Equally important, the Phase 1 report's framing of "sale as going

concern" as a meaningfully different option from "sale for residential development" does not survive scrutiny. Both forms of sale surrender the asset, the social functions of the facility, and the municipality's ability to steer subsequent changes in use. We cannot know today what the future will bring once the property is in private hands: ownership may change, development partners may arrive, the local property market may shift. Conditions of sale offer only limited protection against subsequent rezoning, consent use, or further development, because these processes are decided through their own statutory frameworks. Disposal is irreversible: land of this kind, in this location, cannot be re-acquired by the municipality once sold.

5. The financial case for disposal is not fully presented. The report relies on three financial years (2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25). The 2021/22 financial year is missing entirely, and we respectfully request that it be provided alongside sufficient earlier comparable years to allow proper trend analysis. Standard practice for municipal infrastructure assessment calls for lifecycle analysis over a substantially longer window than three years. The composition of expenditure is not analysed, and the framework used to evaluate the facility's performance does not reflect the standards typically applied to community-service infrastructure. The caravan park nonetheless generated a surplus of approximately R513,000 in 2023/24.
6. The "alternatives are available nearby" claim is misleading on grounds of price, capacity, and location.
7. The proposed disposal arrives at exactly the moment when the South African camping tourism market is growing, and runs directly contrary to the National Department of Tourism's own published strategy on government-owned tourism resorts.
8. The Section 78 process has been linked to the 2026/27 budget cycle in a way that conflates two separate statutory processes: a service delivery mechanism assessment under the Systems Act, and a fiscal and asset management decision under the Municipal Asset Transfer Regulations. Each has different criteria and requires separate procedural treatment.
9. The public participation process required for Phase 1 has not been visible to the community. We are aware that the municipality may indicate that public participation is still to come. We respectfully submit that meaningful public participation must inform the assessment, not follow it. By the time the Phase 1 report is finalised, presented to council, and tabled with the budget, the institutional momentum behind the recommended pathway is already substantial.
10. The investigation has now been extended to include the Barrydale Caravan Park, treating two materially different assets as a single decision and raising distinct procedural concerns about each.

We do not oppose the municipality assessing service delivery mechanisms. We do oppose a process that moves toward an irreversible disposal decision before the community has been meaningfully consulted and before the statutory assessment requirements have been met. Given the permanent nature of disposal and the range of reversible alternatives available, the burden on the municipality to demonstrate that disposal is the only viable option must be very high indeed. That burden has not been discharged by the Phase 1 report.

How this submission is organised. Part I sets out the decision before the municipality: the asset and its scope, the constitutional and statutory framework that applies, and the procedural obligation Section 78 imposes. Part II sets out what is at stake for the community, for the heritage of the town, and for future councils. Part III addresses the specific concerns we have with the Phase 1 report. Part IV covers the inclusion of the Barrydale Caravan Park and our requested actions.

PART I: THE DECISION BEFORE THE MUNICIPALITY

1. The asset and its scope

The Phase 1 report describes the caravan park as a 2.36-hectare facility on Erf 5144. The municipality's own property register indicates that the operational caravan park complex extends across additional adjacent municipal erven:

- **Erf 5144** (2.3685 hectares, registered 1998): the main caravan park parcel
- **Erf 4079** (1,500 m², registered 1992): adjacent municipal erf, Resort Zone
- **Erf 2747** (846 m², registered 1983): adjacent municipal erf, Resort Zone, the Glen stream traverses this erf
- **A portion of Erf 1** of Swellendam (approximately 2,250 m², subject to confirmation by the municipality): the historic original municipal parcel registered in 1924, of which a section forms part of the caravan park operational footprint

The combined operational area of the caravan park complex therefore exceeds the 2.36 hectares described in the Phase 1 report. Erfs 4079 and 2747 are held by the municipality and, based on their spatial positions, are accessible only through Erf 5144. The Glen stream traverses Erf 2747. The 2,250 m² portion of Erf 1 within the caravan park footprint sits within the much larger Erf 1 parcel that constitutes the historic original municipal commonage of Swellendam.

The Phase 1 report does not address the disposition of Erfs 4079 and 2747. The report's discussion of disposal options refers only to "the property" without clarifying whether the entire operational complex is contemplated or only Erf 5144. This creates several procedural concerns:

- If only Erf 5144 is to be disposed of, Erfs 4079 and 2747 become inaccessible to the municipality except through a buyer's land, requiring servitudes and reducing the value of those retained erven.
- If all three erven are to be bundled in a disposal, the affected area is materially larger than the 2.36 hectares the report discusses, and the heritage, environmental, and community considerations attach to the broader complex.

- The river frontage of Erf 2747 represents a separable and significant asset with future tourism, recreational, and conservation potential that is not analysed in the report.

We request that the municipality clarify in writing which erven are within the scope of the Section 78 process, and provide a full property-by-property analysis of the implications of each disposal option for each affected erf.

2. The constitutional and statutory framework, and the precedent of leased community facilities

A decision of this nature, affecting a long-held community-use asset in the heart of a heritage town, sits within a broader constitutional and statutory framework that the Phase 1 report does not fully engage with.

The Constitution's Section 152(1)(c) commits municipalities to "promote social and economic development," and Section 153 requires structuring of administration and budgeting "to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community." Land held by a municipality for community use, including affordable accommodation, recreational provision, continuous public access to in-town public space, and the potential to support local employment and skills development, falls within this mandate. A municipal asset that is currently providing affordable accommodation, employing local staff, and capable of supporting hospitality and tourism training under a partnership arrangement, is directly contributing to the social and economic development that the Constitution requires municipalities to promote. Disposal removes the asset from the framework within which it can serve those constitutional purposes.

SPLUMA further obliges municipalities to manage land in accordance with the principle of **spatial justice**, which Section 7 of the Act describes as redressing "past spatial and other development imbalances" and ensuring that spatial planning improves access to land and prevents the emergence of disadvantage. The Municipal Asset Transfer Regulations of 2008 require public consultation before disposal of high-value capital assets and consideration of whether assets are needed for basic municipal services or any other reason. The National Heritage Resources Act provides additional protections for sites within designated heritage areas.

These frameworks together establish that decisions to dispose of community-use assets in heritage areas require consideration well beyond financial performance. Continuity of public use, heritage location, spatial justice, and community functions are all relevant considerations under existing law. The Phase 1 report does not address them.

We further note that the municipality already operates a model of leased community facilities, in which community organisations pay rent or other consideration and operate facilities on municipal land. This is not

a hypothetical mechanism. It is a practical arrangement the municipality uses in its own operations. The existence of this model demonstrates that the municipality is institutionally capable of operating Section 76 community-use arrangements. The Phase 1 report's framing of the caravan park as a binary choice between full municipal management and outright sale does not reflect the range of arrangements the municipality already employs.

3. The procedural obligation: a complete Section 76 and 78 assessment is required by law

The Phase 1 report makes a candid and important admission. The municipality acknowledges that it does not currently have the budget or the staff capacity to maintain and revitalize the caravan park to the standard it deserves. We accept this. It is an honest acknowledgement of a real constraint, and it is the right starting point for a service delivery mechanism assessment.

What we respectfully submit is that the municipality's own diagnosis does not point toward disposal. The law sets out a structured process precisely for situations of this kind, in which a municipality recognises that internal capacity is limited and considers a range of alternative ways of delivering the service. The purpose of that statutory process is to find the right mechanism, not to default to the most permanent one. We set out below what the law requires, and the alternatives that the law expects to be considered.

Section 76 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, sets out the full range of service delivery mechanisms a municipality may consider. These include internal mechanisms (departmental delivery, internal business unit, municipal entity) and external mechanisms (service delivery agreement with another organ of state, community-based organisation, service provider, or any legally competent person or entity).

Section 78(1) requires that a municipality must first assess its capacity to provide the service through an internal mechanism, the costs and benefits of doing so, the potential for organisational reform to deliver the service, the impact on development and employment, and the views of organised labour, before turning to external mechanisms. Section 78(2) makes clear that external mechanisms may only be explored after this internal assessment is complete. Section 78(3) then sets out further requirements before an external mechanism is decided upon, including community views and impact on development and employment.

This sequential obligation is statutory. On a proper reading of Section 78, the assessment requires substantive engagement with each of the criteria the Act sets out, and the stages cannot simply be collapsed or skipped.

The Phase 1 report appears not to satisfy these requirements. It considers only two scenarios in any depth: continued municipal management without an investment plan or partnership arrangement, and outright sale in two forms. The report does not contemplate continued municipal management with investment,

partnership, or community input as a meaningful option, nor does it consider any of the following Section 76 alternatives, each of which is designed precisely to address the kind of capacity constraint the municipality has acknowledged:

- **Long-term lease with retained municipal ownership**, in which the asset stays on the municipal balance sheet but operations are run by a qualified third party against a performance contract. This mechanism would create permanent local employment for operators, maintenance staff, and administrative personnel, while protecting the public interest in the asset.
- **Concession arrangements** with revenue-sharing and performance obligations, which combine private-sector operational efficiency with public-asset retention. Concessions of this kind typically include local employment and training obligations as part of the performance contract.
- **Community trust or cooperative model**, in which ownership is held in trust for the community of Swellendam, with operational management contracted out and surplus returned to local economic development. Models of this kind have been used elsewhere in South Africa for tourism and conservation assets. This mechanism is particularly well-suited to a heritage tourism asset of the kind under consideration, and it offers the strongest potential for community-led job creation and training.
- **Public-private partnership** under Section 120 of the Municipal Finance Management Act, with shared capital obligations and shared revenue. Partnerships of this kind also typically include local employment and skills development obligations.
- **Municipal entity** under Chapter 8A of the Municipal Systems Act and the Companies Act, in which the asset remains municipally owned but operations are run by a separate entity dedicated to the facility. This model has been used elsewhere in South Africa for tourism and recreation assets.

Each of these is a legitimate Section 76 mechanism. Their omission from a Phase 1 study is a substantial procedural failing.

There is a further point that deserves emphasis. Each of these alternative mechanisms, in different ways, contributes to local economic development, employment, and training in a way that disposal does not. The municipality's own Integrated Development Plan reflects this priority. The 2026-2027 Draft IDP includes a dedicated section on Local Economic Development (LED) Projects and Training, references the Small-Town Regeneration Programme, and aligns the municipality's strategy with the national Medium-Term Development Plan, the first strategic priority of which is to "drive inclusive growth and job creation." The Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism has its Growth for Jobs Strategic Framework. The 2023 Socio-Economic Profile of the Swellendam municipal area notes that "strategic skills development initiatives are required" to sustain employment gains in the area.

A community-run caravan park in Swellendam, operated under a trust, cooperative, lease, concession, or partnership arrangement, could:

- Create permanent local employment in operations, maintenance, hospitality, grounds-keeping, and administration
- Provide structured training opportunities in hospitality and tourism, both of which are subjects in the National Curriculum Statement for South African schools and significant sectors of the regional economy
- Function as a working training facility for learners from local schools, school-leavers seeking entry into the tourism industry, and adult learners through Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) accredited programmes
- Attract project funding from a range of sources, including the National Department of Tourism, the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism, the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund, the National Skills Fund, and international development partners

These outcomes align directly with the municipality's stated LED priorities and the strategic priorities of both provincial and national government. Disposal forecloses all of this. The income from a once-off sale is transient. The economic and social benefits of a community-run asset compound over years and across generations.

The omission of these alternatives is particularly striking given the report's own diagnosis. The report acknowledges that "readily available budget and manpower to revitalize the park to its former glory are just not available." This is precisely the situation that the alternatives above are designed to address. A municipality that lacks the operational capacity to run a facility itself is the textbook case for entering into a lease, concession, partnership, community trust, or municipal entity arrangement that brings external capacity to the facility while retaining the underlying public asset. Disposal is not the only response to a capacity gap. It is the most permanent and irreversible response to one.

We respectfully submit that the municipality's assessment obligation under Section 78(1) is not discharged by writing a paragraph asserting that alternatives are not viable. An assessment, in the statutory sense and in light of administrative-law principles under the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, calls for a substantive, documented, evidence-based process. This includes, at minimum, the testing of the market for interest in operating the facility under each Section 76 mechanism. A genuine assessment would publish notice that the municipality is conducting a Section 78 review, invite expressions of interest from any party able to operate the facility under any Section 76 mechanism, allow a reasonable period for proposals, evaluate the responses against the Section 78(1) criteria, and publish the documented evaluation. Only then, if no viable internal or partnership mechanism emerges, would there be a proper basis for considering external alienation.

The report further does not document the assessment of "the views of organised labour" as required by Section 78(1)(a)(v). It does not record consultation with organised labour representing the Supervisor: Resorts, the Senior Clerk/Cashier, the three general assistants, or the maintenance and parks teams whose work supports the caravan park. Without this on the record, we respectfully submit that the Phase 1 report appears not to satisfy this aspect of Section 78(1).

We submit that the report shows the municipality's hand prematurely. A genuine Phase 1 feasibility study is required to widen the consideration of options, not narrow it. For the sake of the town and its people, and in particular to give effect to the municipality's own strategic priorities on local economic development, employment, and training, SPARC requests that the municipality complete the full statutory assessment before any further step is taken.

PART II: WHAT IS AT STAKE

Before turning to the specific concerns with the Phase 1 report, we set out below what would be permanently affected by the disposal under consideration. This is not background context. The decision under consideration is irreversible, and the matters set out in this part cannot be remedied after the fact.

4. The community whose interests must be considered, and the question of gentrification

The caravan park is more than a tourism facility. It serves several community functions that are not adequately served by any other accommodation option in Swellendam:

Long-stay tenants on monthly rates of R4,830, including pensioners on fixed incomes, contract workers, and residents in transition between housing arrangements. Affordable long-stay accommodation in Swellendam is extremely rare, and the caravan park is one of the only options at this price point within the town.

Residents relocating to Swellendam who use the caravan park as interim accommodation while finding permanent housing. This is a routine and important function for any town that hopes to attract new residents, including the working-age skilled residents that the municipality's own LED strategy seeks to grow.

Budget-conscious domestic tourists, including families, retirees, and groups for whom in-town accommodation in the R350 to R960 range is the difference between visiting Swellendam and not.

Eco-conscious and outdoor-oriented visitors, who form part of the growing domestic camping and nature-tourism market that Statistics South Africa, the National Department of Tourism, and industry research consistently identify as an expanding segment.

Residents of the town themselves, particularly for special occasions and family gatherings. The caravan park is used by people from across Swellendam for celebrations and milestones when extended family arrives from elsewhere, when home does not have the room, or when an occasion calls for somewhere affordable, beautiful, and close to family. The facilities are also used for day visits, family braais, and gatherings of all kinds, in a way that few other parts of the historic centre still are. In a town where central

Swellendam is increasingly expensive to access for residents who do not live within the historic core, this function is significant. The caravan park is one of the few remaining places where the heart of the old town remains accessible to the wider community on a basis of equal access. Disposal would remove this access at exactly the price point that makes it possible. This dimension of the facility's social value bears directly on the principle of spatial justice set out in Section 7 of SPLUMA, which obliges municipalities to manage land in ways that improve, rather than diminish, access to the spatial heart of the towns they govern.

The town's hosting capacity for visitors who serve municipal and community life. This is a broad category and we are not able to list it exhaustively. Recent and current examples include contractors and workers on local infrastructure and development projects, professionals who come to Swellendam on a temporary basis to provide specialist services, researchers and academics, people participating in cultural and community events, film and production teams, government officials on inspection, conference delegations, and disaster response personnel. The Overberg Wind Farm project, while a private development rather than a municipal one, is the current major example of the kind of demand the facility serves, and the Phase 1 report itself acknowledges this when it observes that wind farm activity has increased demand for occupation. This is in fact the most useful illustration of why disposal is short-sighted. A decade ago, no one would have predicted the scale of wind farm activity that is now placing demand on local accommodation in Swellendam. The range of people who may need affordable in-town accommodation in future cannot be predicted in detail. The category itself is real, recurring, and ongoing, and the cost of being without an in-town affordable option when an unforeseen need arises falls on the town.

For stays of more than a few nights, the alternative of guest house accommodation in Swellendam is simply more expensive than the people whose work in town the municipality and the community benefit from can typically afford. The caravan park's chalet rate, and its monthly long-stay rate, provide a price point that no other in-town accommodation matches. Equally importantly, the municipality currently has the flexibility to host service providers, contractors, and other visitors on municipal business at the caravan park at no charge to those visitors, because the asset is municipally owned and operated. This is a routine and useful function for a municipality of this scale. Under outright sale, this function disappears entirely. Under a partnership arrangement such as a community trust or cooperative, the terms on which the municipality could access accommodation for visiting officials or contractors would be negotiated, but the underlying asset would remain available to the community in a way it would not be under disposal.

Emergency and contingency accommodation. The COVID-19 pandemic provided one extreme example of this accommodation function: the caravan park served as the town's quarantine facility. Future emergencies of any kind, including public health events, fires, floods, and other displacement scenarios, will find the municipality without an in-town accommodation asset to deploy. The town would be wholly dependent on private operators and their commercial pricing in moments of greatest need.

The report does not assess the impact on these user categories of removing the only municipal facility that serves them. Section 78 requires consideration of "the likely impact on service users, the local community and municipal staff." This consideration is absent from the Phase 1 report.

We also note that the cumulative effect of the disposal options contemplated in the report would change the social and economic character of the site and its surrounding area in significant ways. Long-stay residents would be displaced. Affordable in-town accommodation for budget-conscious domestic tourists would no longer be available. A site that has been a place of gathering, of community use, and of affordable access to the heritage core of the town for 65 years would become either a private commercial operation pricing differently from the current facility, or a residential development for buyers able to afford prime in-town property.

This kind of change is often described as gentrification. Most readers will be familiar with the term, but for clarity it refers to a process in which an area's character shifts as wealthier users and uses displace lower-income users and uses, and the social and economic accessibility of the place narrows. Gentrification is a foreseeable consequence of the disposal pathways considered in the report. Section 78 requires the municipality to consider the impact of any service delivery mechanism decision on the local community. We respectfully submit that this dimension of impact has not been addressed in the Phase 1 report.

We want to surface one observation that runs through every category set out above and that we believe is fundamental to a proper assessment of the matter. The social functions of the caravan park (the long-stay rate, the retiree discount, the in-town affordability for budget-conscious visitors, the access for the wider community, the municipality's flexibility to host its own visitors at no charge, the day visits and family gatherings that residents from across Swellendam rely on, the capacity to serve as an emergency facility) exist *because* the caravan park is a public service. They are not features that happen to coexist with public ownership. They are a function of it. A commercial operator under private ownership answers to commercial logic over time. The same site, under the same trees, with the same heritage adjacency, would offer materially different terms of access to the wider community. This observation does not depend on assumptions about any particular future buyer's intentions. It follows from the structural difference between a public service and a private commercial operation.

5. Heritage, the Conservation Area Overlay Zone, and the only large open space in the Overlay

The Swellendam Caravan Park has been in continuous operation as a public asset since 1960. The site sits on 2.36 hectares of in-town land at 34 Glen Barry Road, within walking distance of the Drostdy (one of

South Africa's most significant Cape Dutch heritage buildings, dating to 1747) and adjacent to the Marloth Nature Reserve. Swellendam itself contains over 50 buildings with provincial heritage classification.

5.1 The Conservation Area Overlay Zone

The site falls within the Swellendam Conservation Area Overlay Zone established under the municipality's own Integrated Zoning Scheme By-Law, 2020, as shown on Plan 1 of the by-law. The Phase 1 report does not acknowledge this. This is a substantial procedural failing.

The Conservation Area Overlay Zone is established expressly for "the protection of the historical and architectural character of the town." Its provisions include:

- That no development in, or alteration of, a heritage place or heritage area may occur without the municipality's prior approval
- That applications must comply with the provisions and purposes of the National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999
- That the municipality must keep a register of heritage places and designate them on the zoning map
- The express protection of oak trees proclaimed as national monuments
- The express protection of "scenic beauty"
- Aesthetic approval requirements for architectural design, colour, materials, building lines, and general appearance

The Phase 1 report's contemplation of "high-income development" on the site warrants particular scrutiny. The choice of this phrase rather than simply "residential development" is not explained in the report. It might be intended to signal a particular target market and price expectation for any disposal, or it might be intended to suggest that a higher price point would preserve the scenic character that the Conservation Area Overlay Zone protects. We address the second interpretation, since it is the one most directly relevant to the heritage and zoning framework of this section.

Scenic character in a Conservation Area is held by what is there, including in particular what is not built. A high-income residential development, however tastefully designed and architecturally controlled, fills space that is currently open. Mature trees would be lost or constrained. The watercourse would be reshaped or buffered. The visual quality of an unbuilt 2.36-hectare interval within the historic core, at the foot of the Langeberg and within the Conservation Area Overlay Zone, would be replaced by the visual quality of however many residential units the site could be made to accommodate. Whatever the quality of the architecture, the contribution that the site currently makes to the scenic character of the Conservation Area is precisely its character as open ground at the foot of the mountains, with mature trees, a stream, and 65 years of community use built into its landscape.

The "high-income" qualifier in the report cannot remedy this. Scenic protection in a Conservation Area is not a function of the income of the residents. It is a function of how land is used, what is built, and what is preserved.

5.2 The only large open space within the Overlay Zone

Within the Conservation Area Overlay Zone, the caravan park is the only large open green space. Smaller pockets of open ground exist within the Overlay, but in terms of contiguous open green space of any meaningful size within the protected historic core, the caravan park stands alone. This is not abstract spatial preference. It is a documented characteristic of the protected zone. The character of the Conservation Area as currently designated relies in part on the visual and spatial breathing room that this 2.36-hectare open parcel provides.

Once built up, particularly with residential development, this spatial quality cannot be recovered. The caravan park is the place where the historic centre of Swellendam can still be experienced as the open, tree-shaded, water-fed environment it was originally laid out to be.

5.3 Adjacency to heritage sites

The caravan park is surrounded by some of the most important heritage sites in Swellendam, several of which are formally designated heritage sites of provincial or national significance. These include The Residence, Morgenzon, the home of the writer M.E.R., Malta, The Glen farmstead, and other graded heritage homes whose historic character depends in part on the surrounding spatial environment. Adjacency to multiple heritage sites of this calibre places the caravan park within a zone of cumulative heritage value, where any change of use has implications beyond the boundaries of the property itself.

5.4 The mature tree stock

The site is home to a mature stock of trees, including indigenous species, substantial specimens that predate the caravan park's establishment in 1960, and trees that have grown over the 65 years of the site's continuous use. Some of these trees form part of the broader heritage tree stock that the by-law expressly protects, including oak trees proclaimed as national monuments elsewhere in the Conservation Area. Recent storm events in the region have caused significant tree losses across the town, making the preservation of the remaining mature stock more important, not less. Development of the site that contemplated removal of mature trees, of any species, would not be a planning question alone; trees forming part of the proclaimed-monument stock fall within the National Heritage Resources Act. The Phase 1 report makes no reference to the trees, their status, or the legal framework governing them.

5.5 The Glen stream

The Glen stream traverses parts of the caravan park complex, particularly Erf 2747. The stream is itself a heritage feature of the town. Any development of the property would have direct implications for the stream and the watercourse environment around it. The Phase 1 report does not engage with the stream at all.

5.6 Cumulative impact on heritage character

Heritage practice recognises the concept of cumulative impact. Single losses, considered individually, may seem manageable. But cumulatively, the heritage character of a town erodes through a series of small decisions, none of which is described at the time as destroying the heritage town. The Conservation Area Overlay Zone exists precisely to recognise that heritage character is held collectively by everything in the zone, not just by the famous individual structures. The Drostdy and its surrounding historic homes derive much of their character from the spatial and landscape setting around them, including tree-shaded ground, open in-town spaces, and modest accessible structures that complete the heritage fabric. Decisions that diminish that setting, even when each is procedurally lawful, accumulate. A heritage town protected only on its most famous buildings, but built up around them, eventually becomes a museum piece in a developed suburb.

5.7 Formal heritage and environmental assessment

A facility of this age, continuity, and location warrants formal heritage and environmental assessment before any alienation is considered, including assessment under the National Heritage Resources Act, the National Environmental Management Act, and the Western Cape Provincial Spatial Development Framework. The Phase 1 report contains no such assessment, and we respectfully submit that any subsequent stage of the Section 78 process must be informed by one.

6. The rezoning requirement, consent use, and the irreversibility of disposal

The current zoning of Erf 5144 is Resort Zone, as confirmed in the municipal zoning records. The other affected erven (4079 and 2747) are also Resort Zone. Resort Zone is defined under the Integrated Zoning Scheme By-Law to provide for short-term holiday accommodation that gives the general public access to special environments. The zoning includes specific restrictions on alienation, including that individual units may not be sold or alienated.

Any disposal of the property for residential or commercial use would therefore require a change of zoning, either through formal rezoning under the Western Cape Land Use Planning Act, 3 of 2014, and SPLUMA, 16 of 2013, or through consent use applications under the Integrated Zoning Scheme By-Law. Both processes carry their own public participation requirements.

The Phase 1 report does not mention these requirements. It does not address the procedural implications of changing the use of the property from Resort Zone to a residential, hospitality, or commercial use. It does not engage with the spatial planning framework at all.

We respectfully raise a concern about how zoning protections work in practice over time. Zoning protections, even within a Conservation Area Overlay Zone, are not absolute. Resort Zone restrictions can be relaxed through consent use applications. Rezoning applications can be granted. Once a property passes into private ownership, the new owner has standing to apply for changes of use, and the community's influence over those subsequent processes is limited.

This matters because the disposal options contemplated in the Phase 1 report involve buyers who would have both the resources and the interest to pursue further land use approvals over time. Examples of land-use trajectories that are commonly associated with disposal of public assets of this kind include:

- A gated or security residential estate, with individual title units
- A high-income townhouse complex
- A hotel or boutique resort development at higher density than the current facility
- A mixed-use development combining residential and commercial uses
- Phased redevelopment leading eventually to complete site transformation

Whatever conditions the municipality may attach to a sale, the practical reality is that subsequent rezoning, consent use, and design approvals are decided through processes that operate over years and involve technical and legal capacity that private owners can deploy in ways the community typically cannot match.

6.1 The "sell to an operator who will keep it as a caravan park" scenario

We anticipate that the most reasonable-sounding version of disposal that will arise in public discussion is a sale to a private operator who undertakes to continue running the facility as a caravan park. We have considered this scenario carefully, and we respectfully submit that it does not offer the protection it might appear to.

The structural concern is that ownership and use are different things. A private owner of the site, even one who is committed at the time of sale to running the property as a caravan park, acquires the standing to apply for changes to how the property is used over the years that follow. Resort Zone restrictions can be relaxed through consent use applications. Rezoning can be sought through the Western Cape Land Use Planning Act and SPLUMA processes. Consent use applications for higher-density development, hospitality use at greater scale, or partial residential redevelopment are determined through statutory processes that a determined applicant with technical and legal capacity can navigate over time. Conditions attached to a sale contract offer only limited protection against this, because subsequent planning approvals are decided through their own procedural frameworks rather than by reference to the original sale terms.

A further structural concern is that we cannot know what the future will bring. The buyer at the point of sale is not necessarily the owner five years later. Ownership may change. Development partners may arrive. The local property market may shift in ways that make one use materially more profitable than another. A change in the economic environment, a generational succession, a corporate acquisition, or any number of other future events may put pressure on the site in directions that no condition of sale can anticipate. The community has no standing in these subsequent decisions in the way it does while the property is in public hands. Once the asset is sold, the municipality and the community lose the ability to steer what happens to the site as those changes unfold over time.

The social functions of the facility raise an equally significant concern. The long-stay rate of R4,830 a month, the retiree discount, the municipality's flexibility to host its own visitors at no charge, the in-town affordable accommodation tier, and the day visits and family gatherings that residents from across the wider town rely on are unlikely to survive private commercial operation in their current form, regardless of the goodwill of any individual buyer. A commercial operator answers to commercial logic over time. The same site, under the same trees, with the same heritage adjacency, would offer materially different terms of access to the community. This is not an assumption about any particular buyer's intentions. It follows from the structural difference between a public service and a private commercial operation.

A long-term lease, concession, partnership, community trust, cooperative, or municipal entity arrangement, by contrast, delivers everything that a private sale could deliver in terms of operational focus and outside investment, while keeping the underlying asset in public hands and the social functions of the facility protected. If the operating arrangement does not work out, the asset remains and the municipality retains the ability to enter into a different arrangement. The distinction is between *operational competence*, which is available through several mechanisms, and *irreversible alienation*, which is available through only one.

We respectfully submit that the Phase 1 report's framing of "sale as going concern" as a meaningfully different option from "sale for residential development" does not survive scrutiny once these structural concerns are taken into account. Both are forms of disposal. Both surrender the same municipal optionality. Both expose the social functions of the facility to commercial logic over time. The substantive distinction in this matter is not between two forms of sale. It is between disposal and retention.

6.2 The deepest concern

The deepest concern, however, is irreversibility. Once disposed of, the property cannot be re-acquired by the municipality. There is no equivalent site available. There is no parcel of in-town land of this size, at this location, with this heritage adjacency, that the municipality could buy or assemble in future. Land like this comes onto the public balance sheet once, in the original surveying and town planning processes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and stays there unless disposed of. Disposal is permanent. The decision the municipality is being asked to make is therefore not a decision about the next five or ten years. It is a decision about the next several decades, and about every council that will sit during them.

There is a related concept worth naming. In governance terms, retaining ownership of an asset preserves what is often called municipal optionality: the future flexibility to lease, partner, redevelop, repurpose, or even sell at a later moment when conditions are clearer or alternative operators have come forward. A municipality that retains the caravan park, whether under direct management or under one of the Section 76 partnership arrangements, keeps all of these options open for future councils and future generations of ratepayers. A municipality that disposes of the asset surrenders all of them. The decision in front of the municipality is therefore not only about how to manage the facility today. It is also about how much flexibility to leave to those who will steward the town's assets after us.

We respectfully request that any subsequent phase of the Section 78 process include a detailed analysis of the rezoning and consent use possibilities under each disposal option, and an explicit acknowledgement of the irreversibility of any disposal decision.

7. Investment, not divestment, and the question of stewardship

We submit that the most important opportunity in this entire matter, and the one the Phase 1 report does not engage with at all, is the potential for a properly structured operational arrangement to develop the caravan park as a meaningful source of permanent local employment and accredited training. The municipality has openly acknowledged that it does not currently have the budget or staff capacity to maintain and revitalize the caravan park to the standard it deserves. We have already submitted that this acknowledgement is honest and that it is the right starting point for the assessment. What we want to develop further in this section is what an alternative arrangement could practically achieve, and why a partnership or trust operator would address the underlying problem more effectively than disposal does.

As set out in Section 3, the alternative arrangements available under Section 76 of the Systems Act are precisely designed for the situation the municipality finds itself in. They are not only mechanisms for protecting the asset. They are mechanisms for unlocking what the asset could become. Community trust and cooperative tourism operations elsewhere in South Africa have a documented track record of delivering permanent local employment in operations, maintenance, hospitality, grounds-keeping, reception, administration, and catering, alongside structured training opportunities in hospitality and tourism for learners from local schools, school-leavers entering the industry, and adult learners through SETA-accredited programmes. Funding pathways for such arrangements exist through the National Department of Tourism, the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism, the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund, the National Skills Fund, and various international development partners. The funding architecture exists. The legal mechanisms exist. The need in Swellendam, in a town where formal employment opportunities are limited, exists. What has been missing to date is the institutional decision to test these arrangements rather than reach past them to disposal.

The report describes a sunken floor in one chalet, a leaking roof on the supervisor's residence, ablution facilities of varying quality, and 15 of 34 braai areas in disrepair. None of these are catastrophic. They are exactly the symptoms of the under-investment the report itself acknowledges. Visitor accounts of the facility consistently note two things in tension: that the location is exceptional (mountain views, walking distance to town, big shady grass sites, adjacency to Marloth) and that the facility is run-down. The Conservation Area Overlay Zone, the surrounding heritage homes, the Drostdy proximity, and the Glen stream are not assets the municipality can recreate. The deterioration of the operational facility, by contrast, is the result of choices that can be reversed. The site cannot be recreated. The facility can be revived. The two facts together define the case for retention under a properly structured operational arrangement.

This points to a different framing of the underlying problem. The Phase 1 report treats the run-down state of the facility as evidence that disposal is appropriate. We respectfully submit the opposite reading. The wear visible at the caravan park is a familiar pattern: a community facility, owned by a municipality that has many competing responsibilities, gradually slips down the priority list as larger and more urgent demands present themselves. No fault attaches to any individual for this. It is the natural shape of how local government attention is distributed when a small municipality is asked to do many things at once.

Section 76 partnership mechanisms exist precisely to address this pattern. A community trust, cooperative, lease, or partnership operator brings something the municipality cannot easily bring to a single facility: undivided focus. A dedicated operator's reputation, livelihood, and ongoing relationships depend on the facility being well-run. The facility is not one item on a long agenda; it is the operator's daily concern. That is the difference between a facility that is managed alongside many other priorities, and a facility that is somebody's primary work.

We do not dispute that a private operator under appropriate conditions could also bring focused operational attention to the facility, and could in principle invest in heritage-sensitive improvements that the municipality has not been able to fund. The question is not whether private operational stewardship can be good. In many cases it can be excellent. The question is whether the municipality should reach for the most permanent solution available before testing the reversible alternatives that the statute requires it to consider. A long-term lease, concession, or partnership with a private operator can deliver everything a sale would deliver in terms of operational focus and private investment, while keeping the underlying asset on the public balance sheet and preserving the municipality's ability to adjust terms, change operators, or repurpose the site in future. The distinction is between operational competence (which is available through several mechanisms) and irreversible alienation (which is available through only one).

A modest investment plan, supported by a focused operational arrangement, would likely produce a facility that serves the community well, generates ongoing surplus, and protects an irreplaceable in-town asset for future generations of Swellendam residents.

As noted in Section 8 below, the caravan park is at present not easily discoverable through the channels most travellers now use to find and book accommodation. The current arrangement is that bookings are

made by telephoning the municipality during office hours and arranging payment by electronic transfer. Listing the facility on the booking and aggregator platforms used by domestic and international travellers, including those most used by the South African camping community, would be a small administrative change with potentially substantial market-reach consequences. No capital expenditure is required. No physical change to the site is required. The change is largely a matter of staff time and a decision to engage with the modern booking environment. We raise this not as a consulting recommendation but as a concrete illustration that the under-investment the report itself acknowledges is addressable through operational change rather than disposal. A municipality, partnership operator, or community trust running the facility under any of the alternative mechanisms in Section 3 could implement this change in weeks.

We request that any subsequent phase of the Section 78 process include a fully costed investment scenario as an additional option, alongside the partnership and trust models in Section 3, so that the community has a genuine range of mechanisms to compare.

7A. The retention-as-public-open-space option: a last-resort floor the report does not consider

We raise one further matter in this part of our submission, which sits between the substantive partnership-and-trust mechanisms set out in Section 3 and the requested actions in Section 14. We want to be clear about what we are submitting in this section. Our position remains that the appropriate response to the municipality's acknowledged operational capacity constraints is a proper Section 78(1) assessment of the partnership, trust, cooperative, lease, concession, and municipal entity mechanisms set out in Section 3. Those are the arrangements that would let the caravan park be run well while remaining in public hands. That is the outcome we believe would best serve Swellendam, and we do not concede that it cannot be achieved.

The further option set out below is a last-resort floor, raised on the public record because the Phase 1 report does not raise it at all. If, after a proper Section 78(1) assessment, the municipality were to conclude that none of the partnership or trust mechanisms available under Section 76 of the Systems Act can be sustained at the caravan park (a conclusion that has not been reached on the basis of the Phase 1 report, and that we do not accept can be reached without the substantive assessment we have requested), there is one further option that the Phase 1 report does not address at all, and that we respectfully submit must be assessed before any disposal can be considered.

The site could be retained in public ownership as an open public space within the Conservation Area Overlay Zone. Mature tree stock, the Glen stream, and the open character at the foot of the Langeberg would be preserved. Public access to the heart of the heritage core would be retained. The site would continue to honour the protective purposes of the Conservation Area Overlay Zone established under the municipality's own 2020 Integrated Zoning Scheme By-Law. The principle of spatial justice set out in

Section 7 of SPLUMA, which obliges municipalities to manage land in ways that improve access to the spatial heart of the towns they govern, would be served. The operational requirements of a public open space are materially lower than those of an operating caravan park: no booking system, no chalet maintenance, no specialist accommodation staff, no electricity costs for guest units, no day-to-day hospitality administration. The municipality already manages parks and open spaces across its area. The marginal operational cost of adding the caravan park site to that portfolio, in a basic open-space form, would be a small fraction of the current operational cost of the facility.

We acknowledge that the conversion of the site to a public open space would, in all likelihood, involve the removal of the existing chalet structures, with appropriate environmental and heritage assessment of the demolition process itself. We note that the existing ablution facilities on the site are useful park infrastructure that could be retained: public toilets are standard in well-managed public parks, the relevant buildings are already built and connected to municipal services, and their continued use would support the day-to-day functioning of the open space without requiring fresh capital outlay. This is a substantial change and we do not raise the option lightly. What would remain, however, is the underlying value that cannot be recreated: the land, the trees, the watercourse, the heritage adjacency, the public ownership of an irreplaceable in-town parcel, and operational service infrastructure that supports continued public use of the site.

We are not naive about what running a public open space of this kind would require. A baseline operational profile would include some level of security presence (particularly at night, given the site's position adjacent to the Marloth Reserve and within walking distance of the historic core), routine grounds maintenance, and cleaning staff for the retained ablution facilities. These are real costs, and we believe they should be honestly costed in any assessment. Our submission is that, even with these costs fully accounted for, the operational burden of running a public open space at this site is materially lower than the cost of running an operating caravan park, and well within the ordinary work of a South African municipality with an existing parks and open spaces portfolio.

The configuration of the resulting open space, and the mix of community uses it serves, is a matter for further community engagement. At the lowest end of the operational cost spectrum, a configuration as basic as a fenced public green space with off-leash dog access (a category of public amenity that Swellendam does not currently have, and which has been established at low cost in many South African towns) would already deliver a significant community benefit. South African municipalities operate well-functioning urban parks of comparable scale within historic settings as a matter of routine. The principle is established. The mechanism is available. The site is suited to it.

The Phase 1 report does not contain this option, in any form. It does not appear under Option A, Option B, or Option C. It does not appear as a fallback scenario, an alternative for further investigation, or a footnote. The report moves directly from a finding that the municipality lacks the capacity to operate the facility well, to a recommendation set in which the only outcomes contemplated are continued struggle or sale.

This is a significant omission. The Section 78 assessment is, by statute, an assessment of service delivery mechanisms in light of the municipality's capacity and the community's interests. Where a municipality has acknowledged its operational capacity constraints, and where the asset in question is situated in a Conservation Area Overlay Zone of recognised heritage and spatial-justice significance, the option of retention-as-open-space is a substantive service delivery mechanism that the assessment ought to consider on its own merits. Its absence from the Phase 1 report is procedurally and substantively concerning.

We raise this for two reasons. First, because it should be added to the range of options under proper Section 78 assessment. Second, because the question of *why* this option has not appeared in the Phase 1 report bears directly on the question of what is actually being assessed in this process. If the difficulty of running a caravan park is the stated reason disposal is being considered, the conversion of the site to a public park (which removes the operational difficulty entirely while preserving every other value at stake) should be a natural part of the assessment. Its absence from the report invites the question, which we respectfully raise, of what considerations have shaped the option set the report does contain.

We request that the option of retention as a public open space within the Conservation Area Overlay Zone be formally assessed in any subsequent phase of the Section 78 process, alongside the partnership and trust mechanisms set out in Section 3. We further submit that any move toward disposal, in any form, should not be considered until this last-resort option has been substantively assessed and found, on the evidence, not to serve the community better than sale would.

PART III: CONCERNS WITH THE PHASE 1 REPORT

With the framework set out in Part I and the stakes set out in Part II, the specific concerns with the Phase 1 report are as follows.

8. The financial case is not fully presented, and rests on the wrong standard

The report presents the following income and expenditure data:

- 2022/23: Income R850,000, expenditure R1,437,947 (deficit ~R588,000)
- 2023/24: Income R1,978,137, expenditure R1,465,298 (**surplus ~R513,000**)
- 2024/25: Income R1,181,226, expenditure R1,277,575 (deficit ~R96,000)

We note first that three years is a narrow window for an assessment of this kind. Standard practice for the financial evaluation of municipal infrastructure assets, both in South Africa and internationally, contemplates lifecycle analysis over a longer horizon, typically with at least ten years of historical context together with forward-looking projections over a comparable period.

The omission of the 2021/22 financial year warrants particular attention. The years materially affected by COVID-19 lockdowns and the collapse of domestic tourism were 2019/20 and 2020/21. The 2021/22 financial year fell after the lifting of the more severe lockdown restrictions, and would provide a useful data point for understanding the facility's performance in the period bridging the COVID years and the more recent figures the report does include. Its omission leaves the reader with an incomplete picture, particularly when combined with the limited three-year window the report otherwise presents.

We respectfully request that the 2021/22 data be provided, alongside earlier comparable years sufficient to give a meaningful longitudinal picture of the facility's performance, with COVID-affected years identified and appropriately contextualised. We also note, for completeness, that during the COVID-affected years the caravan park served the town as a quarantine facility, which is itself a meaningful form of public-service value that financial figures alone do not capture.

We further note that the 2022/23 figure shows expenditure of R1,437,947 against income of R850,000. The composition of that expenditure is not analysed in the report. The supervisor's residence is described as having a leaking roof, the entrance roof is described as needing rethatching, and one chalet is out of operation due to structural damage. We respectfully ask the municipality to disclose the composition of this expenditure, including whether any portion related to thatching, structural repair, or other major maintenance work undertaken in that year. Maintenance of a thatched facility of this size typically involves a rotating schedule of significant work, and a clearer picture of recurring versus non-recurring components is helpful for any meaningful financial assessment.

We would like to raise a broader point about the framework within which the financial assessment is being made. The Phase 1 report treats financial performance as the primary measure of the caravan park's value. This is not the standard against which community facilities are typically assessed. Municipal parks, recreation facilities, libraries, museums, tourism amenities, and other community-service infrastructure are public services. They are funded from rates and operating budgets because they serve the community, attract visitors, contribute to local economic activity, and form part of the social and cultural infrastructure that makes a town a place worth living in and visiting. They are not generally expected to be profit centres. A municipal facility that broadly approaches break-even, and that in good years generates a meaningful surplus, is performing well by the standards of community infrastructure.

A surplus of approximately R513,000 in a single year on a facility of this kind is a strong result, not a marginal one. The trajectory across the three years presented suggests that the facility has real revenue capacity, particularly given that the report itself notes increased demand from the Overberg Wind Farm project. The report has not modelled any operational adjustment, partnership arrangement, or investment scenario that might be expected to change the trajectory.

We respectfully draw the municipality's attention to one operational reality that materially affects how the financial figures in the report should be read. The only documented way for a member of the public to book accommodation at the caravan park is by telephoning the municipality directly during office hours, with

payment then arranged by electronic transfer. The facility does not appear on the contemporary booking and aggregator platforms through which most domestic and international travellers now discover and reserve accommodation. A potential guest searching online for accommodation in Swellendam will not readily encounter the caravan park at all. This means the income figures in the Phase 1 report reflect the performance of a facility whose reach into the modern accommodation market is limited not by the facility itself but by the booking channel it operates through. Whatever those figures are, they do not represent the facility's potential under ordinary market conditions. Any financial assessment that draws conclusions about viability from these numbers, without acknowledging the underlying marketing reach problem, is incomplete. We respectfully submit that conclusions about the facility's viability should not be drawn without first testing whether it can attract bookings through the channels guests actually use.

There is also a financial consideration the report addresses only partially. The municipality currently incurs the caravan park's electricity costs as an expenditure line. Under disposal, the new owner would pay for electricity to the municipality, which provides electricity in Swellendam. The Phase 1 report implies that this turns a cost into a revenue. We respectfully submit that this is a relabelling of the same energy flow rather than a genuine financial gain. The municipality would lose the asset and its associated community value, and would gain only the difference between the cost of supplying electricity and the revenue from selling it, plus rates income on the property. A complete financial comparison would model the full revenue, cost, and value picture for each scenario over a 10 to 20 year horizon. That model is not in the report.

It is worth setting out the underlying exchange in plain terms. What the municipality would receive on disposal is a once-off sale proceed, plus a stream of rates income and utility revenue from the new owner over time. What the municipality would surrender is an irreplaceable in-town public asset, its full operational flexibility, the social and economic functions it currently performs for the community, and the future optionality of every council that comes after this one. We respectfully submit that the modest fiscal gain from the second column does not warrant the permanent loss represented by the first, particularly when the alternatives in Section 3 could deliver the operational improvements the municipality seeks without the surrender.

A related consideration concerns the value of the existing infrastructure. The caravan park is a fully serviced site, with established electricity, water, sewage, road access, structures, and operational systems built up over 65 years. A purchaser of the site, whether for continued operation or for residential redevelopment, acquires those services already in place. This represents a substantial capital investment, paid for by the ratepayers of Swellendam over decades, that would transfer to the buyer at the point of sale. The Phase 1 report does not quantify the replacement value of this established infrastructure, nor does it model how that value should be reflected in any reserve price or in the comparative assessment of disposal versus retention. We respectfully submit that any responsible Section 78 process must account for the value of ratepayer-funded infrastructure.

Finally, the municipality is proposing to dispose of an asset that, once sold, cannot be re-acquired. The 2.36-hectare in-town location is irreplaceable. We addressed this question of irreversibility in Section 6.

9. The "alternatives are available" claim

The report states (Section 4.3) that "camping options are, however, available in the nearby area, such as at Buffeljags and Kambati." This claim is presented as mitigating the loss to users. We submit that it is misleading on three grounds.

We would add, in fairness, that the nearby-area picture is in fact broader than the two facilities the report names. The Bontebok National Park, managed by SANParks, operates a campsite some distance out of Swellendam toward Bredasdorp. The Marloth Nature Reserve, on the slopes of the Langeberg, accommodates small bush camps suited to hikers and nature-based visitors. The expanded picture does not weaken our submission. It strengthens it: more facilities in the nearby area only makes clearer how distinct each of them is from a municipal in-town caravan park, and how poorly the report's "alternatives are available nearby" framing captures what would actually be lost.

We note, in passing, that the Phase 1 report's list of "alternatives in the nearby area" did not include either of these facilities, both of which are well-known to anyone with local knowledge of the area, and one of which (the SANParks campsite at Bontebok) is operated by a national public-sector body. We raise this not as a substantive concern (the additional facilities do not change our analysis below) but as a procedural one. A Phase 1 study compiled with adequate local knowledge would normally be expected to include them. Their omission from the report's listing is worth noting, and we respectfully invite clarification of how the list of nearby alternatives in Section 4.3 of the report was compiled.

Capacity. The municipal caravan park has 100 camping sites and 20 chalets. Umshanti at Buffeljags has a small number of camping sites. Kambati has a different operational scale and pricing model. The SANParks campsite at Bontebok and the bush camps at Marloth are each modest in scale and serve specific market segments. None of these facilities, individually or in combination, could absorb the displaced demand from the municipal park even at a fraction of current occupancy, and the disparity would be greater still if the caravan park were operated under any of the partnership or trust arrangements considered in Section 3, with proper online presence and market reach.

Pricing. Available pricing data indicates that comparable accommodation at the alternative venues is priced at significantly higher rates than the municipal park. The municipal park's rate of R350 per night for 4 people, R790 to R960 for chalets, and R4,830 per month for long-stay accommodation, is not matched in any of the alternatives, particularly for the long-stay category. The municipality also offers discounts for the elderly, an effective social-policy instrument aligned with the spirit of the Older Persons Act, 13 of 2006, that would be lost under any disposal.

Location and orientation. All of the alternatives are outside Swellendam. Kambati is 20 to 25 kilometres west of town. Umshanti is 9 to 12 kilometres out at Buffeljags. The Bontebok National Park campsite is

some distance out toward Bredasdorp. The Marloth bush camps are in the mountains. Each of these facilities is oriented toward nature-based tourism in a specific setting, rather than toward in-town accommodation. The municipal caravan park, by contrast, is in town. For visitors who want to experience Swellendam itself, an in-town affordable option is not equivalent to a rural, national-park, or mountain facility some distance away. For long-stay tenants, walking access to shops, clinics, schools, and town life is not replaceable by a facility that requires a car. For residents of the wider community who use the caravan park for day visits and gatherings, none of the alternatives is in any meaningful sense an alternative at all.

There is a deeper principle at stake. The caravan park sits on prime land within the historic core of one of the three oldest towns in South Africa, within walking distance of the Drostdy and adjacent to Marloth Nature Reserve. Public assets in prime locations serve everyone, not only those who can afford private equivalents. Once such assets are privatised, the historic core of the town becomes accessible to visitors only at the price-points of private operators. An in-town public facility at municipal pricing is the mechanism through which a public good, namely access to the heart of a heritage town, is kept available across income groups.

10. Market context and national tourism policy

The report proposes disposal at a moment when the camping tourism market is growing, not contracting. Statistics South Africa confirms that South Africa's tourism sector surpassed pre-pandemic levels in 2025, with 10.5 million tourists, and the National Department of Tourism reports continued strong growth into 2026. The South African camping segment of domestic tourism has been a particular area of growth in recent years.

The Phase 1 report itself notes (Section 4.2) that "with the Overberg Windfarm project there is an increase in demand for occupation."

More importantly, the report runs directly contrary to the National Department of Tourism's own published strategy. The Domestic Tourism Strategy Review explicitly identifies government-owned resorts and caravan parks as a category of asset to be preserved and rehabilitated, not disposed of, and points to partnership with the private sector as the route to rehabilitate and effectively manage such resorts. The strategy treats camping accommodation as an inexpensive and accessible category of domestic tourism that should be supported.

The national policy direction is partnership-and-rehabilitation, not disposal. The Phase 1 report does not engage with this policy framework at all. Any responsible Section 78 assessment of a municipal tourism asset should situate the local decision within the national policy context. This Phase 1 report does not.

We further note that municipal caravan parks have been a subject of substantive academic and policy attention as a distinctive category of South African tourism and local-economic-development asset. Research funded by the National Department of Tourism, including work by Rogerson (2020) in the *Bulletin of Geography: Socio-Economic Series*, identifies municipal caravan parks as "assets which could be leveraged for tourism growth and local development" and notes that the Western Cape has "the largest cluster of municipal owned caravan parks in South Africa." The same body of research observes that municipal ownership of caravan parks is declining across most of South Africa, with many municipalities considering privatisation, and treats this trend as a matter of concern rather than endorsement. The research situates the loss of municipal caravan parks within a broader narrative of small-town South Africa losing the public assets that have historically supported local tourism economies. A related study, Rogerson and Rogerson (2021) on the historical evolution of caravan parks in South Africa, traces the central role of municipal governments in the early supply-side establishment of these facilities, particularly in small towns. The Swellendam Caravan Park, established in 1960 and continuously operated since, sits squarely within this documented national heritage of municipal tourism provision. The proposed disposal would form part of the very pattern the academic literature identifies and questions, namely the gradual loss of a category of municipal tourism asset that has historically supported local economic development in small-town South Africa.

There is also a tension between the proposed disposal and the municipality's own publicly stated tourism agenda. The 2026-2027 Draft IDP includes dedicated sections on Local Economic Development (LED) Projects and Training (Section 3.13), the Small-Town Regeneration Programme (Section 3.13.5), and Tourism Projects and Events (Section 3.14). The Swellendam Growth and Development Strategy as previously described in the 2018/19 Annual Report identified "tourism and events" as a "strategically important sector of the local economy" with intended "job creation and investment" outcomes, and committed the municipality to "re-position Swellendam as a centre of excellence for tourism and events." More recent municipal documentation continues to position tourism as central to local economic development.

The Swellendam Caravan Park is one of the town's longest-running, lowest-priced, and most accessible tourism assets, attracting the precise category of domestic and international visitor whose presence supports the local hospitality, retail, food, and services economy. Disposal of this asset, particularly for residential or higher-priced commercial use, sits uncomfortably alongside the municipality's stated commitment to growing the tourism sector. We respectfully submit that any Section 78 assessment of a municipal tourism asset should be tested for consistency with the municipality's own LED and tourism strategy. The Phase 1 report does not undertake this test.

11. The budget linkage and the conflation of two separate statutory processes

Council Item A50 of 31 March 2026 resolved that "the Section 78 report on the management of Swellendam Caravan Park, including the possibility to alienate the land, be tabled to Council with the draft budget for 2026/27, for consideration."

This linkage is procedurally significant, and we acknowledge that the matter requires careful framing.

We do not suggest that a municipality is forbidden from considering Section 78 matters in the same year as the budget. We recognise that municipalities have legitimate fiscal pressures, that asset management is part of responsible municipal financial planning, and that timing of various processes will often overlap in practice.

The concern is more specific. Section 78 of the Systems Act is, in its statutory purpose, a *service delivery mechanism* assessment. The criteria in Section 78(1)(a) ask the municipality to consider its capacity to provide a service, the costs and benefits of different delivery options, the potential for organisational reform, the impact on development and employment, and the views of organised labour. These are service-design criteria, not fiscal criteria. The Section 78 process exists to answer the question "what is the best way to deliver this service to the community?" It does not exist to answer the question "which assets can we sell to balance the budget?"

By tabling the Section 78 report together with the draft budget "for consideration," the municipality is effectively combining two distinct statutory processes: a service delivery mechanism assessment under the Systems Act, and a fiscal and asset management decision that, if it results in disposal, must separately comply with the Municipal Asset Transfer Regulations, 2008, made under the Municipal Finance Management Act. Each of these processes has its own criteria, its own public participation requirements, and its own evidentiary standards. Conflating them risks producing a Section 78 assessment that has been shaped by fiscal pressure rather than by the service-design criteria the Act requires, and a disposal decision that has been shaped by the Section 78 framing rather than by the asset-management criteria the Asset Transfer Regulations require.

We respectfully submit that an honest Section 78 process should be conducted on its statutory criteria. If fiscal considerations apply, they should appear in the budget on their own merits, and any consequent decision to dispose of an asset should follow its own statutory process under the Asset Transfer Regulations. Bundling the two together compromises both.

We further note that Item A50 resolves the report be tabled "for consideration." Section 78(3) of the Systems Act sets out that before deciding on a service delivery mechanism that includes external alienation, the municipality must, among other things, give notice to the local community of its intention to explore that mechanism and assess the views of the local community. We respectfully submit that, on a

proper reading of Section 78(3), public participation should inform Council's consideration of a report contemplating alienation rather than follow it.

We acknowledge that the municipality has, at the IDP public engagement meetings held across the wards in April 2026, informed the community that it is looking into the future of the caravan park. We respect that disclosure and the spirit in which it was offered. We would however gently note that these disclosures occurred in the weeks following the Council's approval of the Section 78 investigation on 31 March 2026, and at a point when the Phase 1 report had already been prepared internally. The procedural framework contemplates that notice of an intention to explore an external mechanism should precede the assessment, so that the community has the opportunity to engage with the assessment as it is being made. Disclosure to the community after a report has been prepared and the investigation has been formally authorised is a different procedural act from notice that exploration is about to begin, and we respectfully submit that the requirements of Section 78(3)(a) call for the latter.

We request that the Section 78 process be conducted independently of the budget cycle and assessed on its statutory merits, and that any subsequent disposal decision follow its own procedural path under the Asset Transfer Regulations.

12. Public participation and the procedural timeline

Section 78 of the Systems Act requires a transparent process including appropriate stakeholder engagement. The Phase 1 report itself acknowledges this on page 8.

The procedural trajectory of the Section 78 process is documented in the council record:

- **17 March 2026:** Finance and Governance Portfolio Committee
- **25 March 2026:** Mayoral Committee
- **31 March 2026:** Council Item A50, approving the Section 78 investigation and the inclusion of the Barrydale Caravan Park
- **[Date not on public record]:** Phase 1 report produced internally
- **[Future]:** Report to be tabled with the 2026/27 draft budget "for consideration"

The community does not appear in this sequence. By the time public participation is contemplated, the political shaping of the report has been completed, the council resolution authorising the investigation is in place, and the Phase 1 report (produced internally rather than by an independent service provider) has reached its conclusions. Public participation arriving at this point in the sequence would not satisfy the requirements of Section 78(3), which contemplates community views informing the decision rather than ratifying one already made.

The Phase 1 report itself notes, in the comments from the Municipal Manager, that "legal compliance with the process needs to be ensured." The municipality has therefore acknowledged the public participation obligation but the report does not record any participation process actually undertaken.

Section 78(3)(b)(iii) further requires consideration of "the views of the local community" before an external mechanism is decided upon. This is not a procedural box-tick. It is a substantive requirement that the municipality understand what the community of Swellendam, including ratepayers, long-stay residents, regular visitors, and adjacent property owners, actually thinks about the future of this asset. The Phase 1 report contains no record of community views, no community survey, no community engagement of any kind. The community has not been asked.

We respectfully submit that meaningful community engagement on this matter would surface views the municipality may not currently have heard, including the views of generations of Swellendammers who have used the caravan park, holidayed at it, or hosted family there over decades. Money from a once-off sale is transient. The caravan park, retained and well-stewarded, is an asset that has served the community for 65 years and could continue to do so for generations to come.

We request confirmation of the current public participation timeline, including the date of any public notice, the period for written submissions, and the dates and locations of any public meetings scheduled. In the absence of a visible public participation process, this submission is being made on the public record so that it forms part of any process that does occur.

PART IV: CONCLUDING MATTERS

13. The inclusion of the Barrydale Caravan Park

Council Item A50 of 31 March 2026 also resolved that "approval be granted that the Barrydale Caravan Park be included in the Section 78 report."

We note that the body of the report, including its title ("Caravan Park Section 78 Investigation"), its facts and background, its legislative analysis, and its discussion, refers throughout only to the Swellendam Caravan Park. The Barrydale Caravan Park appears for the first and only time in Recommendation 2, without supporting analysis in the body of the report. It appears, on the face of the document, that Barrydale was added to the resolution at a late stage, after the substantive report on Swellendam had already been prepared.

No separate Phase 1 report on the Barrydale Caravan Park has been published or made available for public comment. We respectfully request clarification of whether such a report exists, and if so, whether it

has been or will be released for public participation. If Barrydale has been folded into the Swellendam Section 78 process without separate analysis, that itself raises a procedural concern.

We further note that the Swellendam Caravan Park and the Barrydale Caravan Park are materially different assets. They occupy different locations, serve different markets, hold different commercial potential, and present different community functions. A Section 78 process that treats them as a single decision risks several outcomes that we respectfully submit are worth flagging. Community attention and engagement become dispersed across two separate towns and two separate communities, each of which has its own interest in the facility on its doorstep. The substantive procedural concerns that apply to one facility may be obscured or diluted by the framing applied to the other. The Section 78 assessment criteria are applied generically rather than to the specific circumstances of each facility. And the route to disposal becomes a single process rather than two, halving the procedural friction in a matter where careful, facility-specific assessment is exactly what the statute requires.

We respectfully submit that each facility requires its own Phase 1 assessment, its own public participation process, and its own Section 78 decision. The two cannot be responsibly bundled without compromising the assessment of either.

We reserve the right to make a separate submission on Barrydale once any corresponding Phase 1 assessment is made public, but note that the substantive concerns set out in this submission are likely to apply equally there.

14. Requested actions

In light of the above, SPARC respectfully requests the following.

Procedural protections, before any further steps are taken:

1. **Immediate clarification** of the public participation timeline for the Section 78 process, including dates, formats, and submission channels.
2. **Conduct of the Section 78 assessment on its statutory criteria, separately from the asset disposal process.** The Section 78 service delivery mechanism assessment under the Systems Act, and any disposal decision under the Municipal Asset Transfer Regulations, are two distinct statutory processes with different criteria. They should be conducted on their respective merits and their respective procedural tracks, even where their timelines may overlap. Investment outcomes that arise from a Section 78 assessment, including any decision to invest in the existing facility, would of course be reflected in the budget at the appropriate time. What we ask is that the Section 78 assessment itself not be shaped by budget-balancing pressure.

3. **Suspension of any further procurement or alienation steps** in the Section 78 process pending completion of the full statutory assessment of Section 76 alternatives and genuine public participation. Any market-testing should follow, not precede, the substantive assessment of the alternatives the statute requires.
4. **A public meeting** in Swellendam at which the Phase 1 report can be presented and discussed with the community, with adequate notice, accessible timing, and assistance for residents who wish to make either oral or written submissions.

The substantive assessment that the statute requires:

5. **A complete Section 78(1) assessment** of all internal mechanisms and Section 76 alternatives, including municipal entity, long-term lease, concession, community trust or cooperative, and public-private partnership. This is a statutory requirement, not a discretionary one. The assessment must be substantive, documented, and evidence-based, including formal expressions-of-interest processes for each Section 76 mechanism where applicable.
6. **Formal consideration of the option of retention as a public open space** within the Conservation Area Overlay Zone, set out in Section 7A, as a substantive alternative to disposal. This option is not addressed anywhere in the Phase 1 report. Where a municipality has acknowledged its operational capacity constraints, and where the site in question is within a Conservation Area Overlay Zone and bears directly on the principle of spatial justice set out in Section 7 of SPLUMA, the retention-as-open-space option is a Section 76 alternative that the assessment ought to consider on its own merits.
7. **Inclusion of a full investment scenario** as an additional option, with costed maintenance and upgrade plans against projected revenue, and consideration of low-cost operational improvements that could expand market reach without capital expenditure.
8. **Documentation of organised labour consultation** as required by Section 78(1)(a)(v) and 78(3)(b)(v).
9. **A community-impact assessment** addressing the long-stay residents, retirees, budget-tourism users, emergency-contingency capacity, and the gentrification effects that would follow disposal.

Information and documentation the assessment requires:

10. **Clarification of the full scope of the asset**, including written confirmation of which erven are within the scope of the Section 78 process (Erf 5144, and whether Erfs 4079 and 2747 are included), and a property-by-property analysis of the implications of each disposal option for each affected erf.
11. **Full disclosure of historical financial data over a meaningful longitudinal window**, including the missing 2021/22 financial year, sufficient earlier comparable years to allow proper trend analysis, a breakdown of expenditure by category separated into recurring and non-recurring items, and clear identification of COVID-affected years.

12. **Heritage and environmental assessment** of the site, including the mature tree stock, the Glen stream, the surrounding heritage sites, and the implications of the Conservation Area Overlay Zone, before any alienation is contemplated.
13. **A detailed analysis of the rezoning and consent use requirements** and spatial planning implications of each disposal option, given that the affected erven are currently zoned Resort Zone.

Wider policy alignment:

14. **Alignment with national tourism policy** as articulated in the Department of Tourism's Domestic Tourism Strategy, and with the municipality's own stated commitments to Local Economic Development, the Small-Town Regeneration Programme, and tourism as a strategic sector.
15. **Publication of any Phase 1 report on the Barrydale Caravan Park**, or confirmation that no such report exists and that Barrydale is being processed without separate analysis.

We make this submission in the spirit of constructive engagement, reflecting the concerns presently raised within SPARC and among community members who have engaged with the issue. The municipality has shown, in recent correspondence from the Speaker's office, that good-faith public participation is possible. We trust that the same spirit will be brought to this matter.

We have prepared this submission carefully and on the basis of the documents and information currently available to us. If any factual statement here is incorrect, or if the municipality holds information that would clarify or correct any of the matters raised, we welcome that feedback and will adjust our position accordingly. The purpose of this submission is to ensure that the Section 78 process is conducted lawfully, transparently, and in the long-term interest of the Swellendam community. Any constructive engagement that contributes to that purpose is welcomed.

Submitted respectfully

SPARC
Swellendam People's Association of Ratepayers Collective

16 May 2026



19 May 2026

Ms A Vorster
The Municipal Manager
Municipality of Swellendam
Swellendam
6740

Cc: The Speaker, The Executive Mayor, MEC Anton Bredell (Western Cape Department of Local Government) and Carmen

SECTION 78 FEASIBILITY STUDY: SWELLENDAM CARAVAN PARK (PHASE 1)

Dear Ms Vorster,

In response to Notice A9/2026 regarding the Section 78 investigation of the Swellendam Caravan Park, SPARC hereby formally lodges its comprehensive submission of 16 May 2026 as a comment in this public participation process. The full submission, originally addressed to the Municipal Manager and copied to the Speaker, the Executive Mayor, and the MEC for Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, is attached for the formal record.

We respectfully wish to place on record the following:

The current public participation window addresses comments on the Phase 1 feasibility study. Section 78(3)(a) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, requires the municipality to give separate notice to the local community of any intention to explore the provision of the service through an external mechanism, before any such direction is decided upon. We expect such notice to follow in due course, with adequate time for meaningful community engagement.

The Municipal Asset Transfer Regulations of 2008 require their own public consultation process before the

SMA (Swellendam Municipal Area)

Barrydale + Buffelsjags + Malgas + Stormsvlei + Suurbraak + Swellendam

We communicate in 3 languages, predominantly English, but are prepared to translate to Afrikaans or isiXhosa on request

disposal of high-value capital assets. This process must be conducted separately and in addition to the Section 78 procedures, should disposal of the caravan park be considered.

We also note Council's resolution of 31 March 2026 (Item A50) that the Section 78 report be tabled with the 2026/27 draft budget for consideration. We respectfully submit that the tabling for consideration does not constitute a decision under Section 78(3), and that any decision on an external mechanism must comply with the procedural protections set out in Section 78(3) of the Systems Act and the Municipal Asset Transfer Regulations of 2008.

We further note that Notice A9/2026 was published in Suidernuus on 1 May 2026 but does not appear on the municipality's official Facebook page, on the municipality's official WhatsApp channel, or on the news or notice pages of the municipal website. For a Section 78 investigation of a public asset of this significance, the consistency of publication across the municipality's routine communication channels is material to whether meaningful public participation has been afforded. Combined with a 20-day comment window and placement in the classifieds section of a regional newspaper, the question of whether the public participation process meets the accessibility standards required by the Municipal Systems Act warrants serious consideration.

SPARC remains committed to constructive engagement with the municipality on this matter.

Kind regards,

SPARC (Swellendam Peoples Association of Ratepayers Collective)

HENNIE SMIT

Chairperson

Carmen Gaffley

From: Rita Van Vollenstee <rita.vanvollenstee@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 19:35
To: Carmen Gaffley
Cc: Toit Loubser; Hennie Smit
Subject: LATE SUBMISSION WITH REGARD TO THE SWELLENDAM CARAVAN PARK

Dear Carmen,

The following letter was sent to SPARC in the early evening of the 21st May 2026. We have sent it through, even though it is "after hours" on the deadline date for submissions because it is extremely important to note the points stated and the dire situation at the Swellendam Caravan Park presently. It speaks directly to the need for the caravan park to be resurrected by whatever means possible.

The note follows:

"My mom, Mariaan, sent me your number. I'm Carmen. My family and I have a caravan at the Swellendam Municipal Park.

I'm not really sure where to start, but it's been very difficult seeing the condition of the park and the lack of maintenance. We've been here for about 7 months now, paying R7,870 per month, and we've stayed at many other caravan parks before — Point in Mossel Bay, Witsand, Stilbaai, Hartenbos and Klein Brak — all of them much more affordable, well maintained, and most of them municipally owned as well.

Since we arrived, we've been trying to communicate with the municipality about the maintenance issues and possibly lowering the rates to attract more campers, which could help bring more income into the park for upkeep. Unfortunately, it feels like our concerns haven't really been taken seriously. For example, one of the baths has been broken since we arrived. My husband even offered to repair it at our own expense, but was told he's not allowed to.

I have several emails going back and forth with the municipality, but instead of trying to work with us, we were basically told to look for other accommodation.

The sad part is that we genuinely love the park and can see so much potential here. My husband was a farm manager at Galenia Estate in Montagu and has experience in landscaping, hospitality, and maintenance, so we often talk about how incredible this place could be with the right management and care.

I hope you have a wonderful day, and please let me know if you need anything else from my side.

Kind regards,
Carmen Slabber
Gold Traders Swellendam"

Kind regards
SPARC TEAM



21 May 2026

Ms A Vorster
The Municipal Manager
Municipality of Swellendam
Swellendam
6740

Cc: The Speaker, The Executive Mayor, MEC Anton Bredell (Western Cape Department of Local Government) and Carmen

FURTHER SUBMISSION ON NOTICE A9/2026 -SECTION 78 INVESTIGATION: SWELLENDAM CARAVAN PARK

Dear Ms Vorster,

In the closing hours of the public participation window on Notice A9/2026, and following further internal review by our membership, SPARC wishes to place the following additional matters on the formal record. These supplement, but do not replace, our submission of 16 May 2026 and our procedural letter of 19 May 2026.

1. The Council-directed third option does not appear to be in the Phase 1 report.

The Council resolution of 31 March 2026 (Item A50/31/03/2026), as unanimously adopted, reads:

"1. that the Section 78 report on the management of Swellendam Caravan Park, including the possibility to alienate the land, be tabled to Council with the draft budget for 2026/27, for consideration.

2. that a third option be included in the feasibility study to investigate outsourcing the lease of the Swellendam Caravan Park to a private developer."

SMA (Swellendam Municipal Area)

Barrydale + Buffelsjags + Malgas + Stormsvlei + Suurbraak + Swellendam

We communicate in 3 languages, predominantly English, but are prepared to translate to Afrikaans or isiXhosa on request

The Phase 1 report appears to contemplate three options: continued municipal management, sale as a going concern, and sale for high-income residential development. On our reading of the report, the option that Council unanimously directed (outsourcing the lease to a private developer, retaining municipal ownership of the land) does not appear to have been included.

We respectfully ask the municipality to confirm whether this third option has in fact been assessed in the Phase 1 report, and if so, where in the document that assessment may be found. If the option has not been included, we respectfully ask what consideration has been given to Council's unanimous directive of 31 March 2026 in this respect.

2. The Barrydale Caravan Park was removed from the Section 78 investigation at the 31 March 2026 Council meeting.

We wish to correct our submission of 16 May 2026 in this respect. Council Item A50/31/03/2026 records:

"The Municipal Manager, Mrs A. Vorster requested that point two regarding Barrydale Caravan Park in the recommendation be removed. The Speaker, Alderman J. du T. Loubser confirmed that the recommendation was accepted with amendment."

Section 13 of our 16 May submission should accordingly be read as reflecting our earlier understanding rather than the final position. The substantive concerns raised in that section about the bundling of materially different assets nonetheless remain relevant to Notice A9/2026, which bundles the Swellendam Caravan Park with the unrelated Barrydale Leiwaterrig irrigation matter in a single public notice.

3. The cadastral position of the property complex requires further clarification.

In Section 1 (Part I) of our 16 May submission, the property reference to "a portion of Erf 1 of Swellendam" should correctly read **"a portion of the Remaining Extent of Erf 1"** (R/E of Erf 1). The original Erf 1 has been partially subdivided and no longer exists as a single undivided property in the deeds registry. The further reference in the same section to "the much larger Erf 1 parcel" should likewise be read as the Remaining Extent of Erf 1. We thank Mr Nico Kriek for bringing this to our attention.

This correction underscores the importance of the broader question raised in our 16 May submission, namely the full scope of the property complex within the Section 78 process. Our submission identified that the operational caravan park extends across Erfs 5144, 4079, 2747, and a portion of what we can now confirm is the Remaining Extent of Erf 1. The Phase 1 report describes the facility as a 2.36-hectare property on Erf 5144 alone.

We respectfully ask the municipality to confirm:

(a) which erven are within the scope of the Section 78 process (Erf 5144 only, or the broader operational complex including Erfs 4079, 2747, and the relevant portion of R/E of Erf 1);

(b) the subdivision history of the original Erf 1, including what portions of the historic municipal commonage have previously been alienated, when, and for what purposes; and

(c) whether the cadastral position of the property complex has been formally assessed as part of the Phase 1 process.

4. A question regarding the actual maintenance spend on the caravan park buildings.

Reviewing the municipal financial records under Core Function: Recreational Facilities, we note the following line item under Contractors: Maintenance of Buildings - CARAVAN PARK:

- 2024/25: Amended Budget R14,440, Actuals R1,478.27
- 2025/26 YTD: Amended Budget R14,000, Actuals R1,350

The Phase 1 report describes the caravan park as suffering from a sunken floor in one chalet, a leaking roof on the supervisor's residence, ablution facilities of varying quality, and 15 of 34 braai areas in disrepair. The report characterises the facility as running at a loss requiring intervention.

We respectfully ask the municipality to confirm whether the figures above represent the full maintenance spend on the caravan park buildings for the 2024/25 financial year, or whether maintenance was undertaken under additional line items not captured by this classification. If the figures above represent the full maintenance spend, we respectfully ask how the level of investment reflected in these figures has been reconciled with the standard of care required to preserve a facility of this kind.

5. A question regarding camping fee income for the current financial year.

The municipal financial records appear to show camping fee income for 2025/26 year-to-date at R917,226.47 against an amended full-year budget of R827,977.

We respectfully ask the municipality to confirm whether this reading of the figures is correct, and if so, whether the implications of this year-to-date revenue performance have been considered in the Phase 1 report's characterisation of the facility's viability.

6. Our requests

In light of the above, SPARC respectfully requests:

(a) that the municipality clarify, on the formal record, the status of the Council-directed third option (outsourcing the lease of the Swellendam Caravan Park to a private developer, retaining municipal ownership of the land), and that this option be formally assessed before any further step is taken in this process;

(b) that the municipality respond to the questions raised in paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 above, so that any conclusion about the future of the facility takes into account the full cadastral picture, the actual level of maintenance investment, and the actual revenue performance the facility is showing;

(c) that the matters set out in our 16 May submission, our 19 May procedural letter, and this further submission be considered together as a single comprehensive comment on Notice A9/2026.

SPARC remains committed to constructive engagement with the municipality on this matter.

Kind regards,

SPARC (Swellendam Peoples Association of Ratepayers Collective)

HENNIE SMIT

Chairperson

Carmen Gaffley

From: Shahieda Satira <ssatira420@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 18:48
To: Carmen Gaffley

Hi as a born an bred Swellendam baby now mother,we as family have many memorable memories with the park.

Families from far who visit and stay here ,from parties to just bonding that's a place one can call home.

Shahiedah Rode

Carmen Gaffley

From: John Newdigate <jnewdigate@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 19:24
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Caravan Park Notice A9/2026

Dear Carmen,

As regards notice A9/2026:

I feel that it is important to keep the caravan park available as a space for families who may not have open natural spaces of their own, to be able to enjoy quality time together in a pleasant leafy environment.

The lower part of the Caravan Park is below the 50 year flood water level. When the Glenbarry stream bursts its banks periodically that undeveloped area provides a spill-over space for the floodwaters, protecting the properties on the other from flood damage.

Having lived opposite the park for over twenty years I have noticed that it is a refuge for a lot of wildlife, especially birds, that need some relatively undisturbed space to breed and forage etc. It would be a great loss to people and animals if we were to lose this open green space in the growing sea of developments around us.

I would like to see the caravan park stay as it is, but with better management and upkeep.

Thanks for your attention and best regards,

John Newdigate.

Carmen Gaffley

From: Ian Garrett <iangarrettceramics@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 19:32
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Swellendam Caravan Park's future - public comment

Dear Swellendam Municipality,

This letter is a response to the window for public comment on the future of the Swellendam Caravan Park in regards to Notice A9/2026 (Section 78 investigation).

As a home owner resident in Swellendam for 25 years, in an area directly adjacent to the Caravan Park, this issue is of direct concern to me.

I feel that the Swellendam Caravan Park is an asset of great value to the community of Swellendam. It allows both local residents and visitors affordable access to the heart of the most scenic 'tourist area' of Swellendam for recreation and accommodation.

Furthermore, the 'green open space' is of value to everyone in the town. It provides a haven for nature with many residents birds such as nesting owls and animals such as otters and mongoose that I have personally sighted regularly along the Glen Stream.

Development of the caravan park would inevitably disturb this nature and drive it away. Of particular natural value is the lower camping ground section of the caravan park, which falls below the Glen Stream high-water flood line and absorbs the overflow of water when the Glen stream floods. Loss of this valuable flood barrier could potentially impact properties through the entire town.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Garrett
4B Glenbarry Rd,
Swellendam

Carmen Gaffley

From: Nancy Soller <nancy.soller.daphne@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 19:44
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Caravan Park Notice A9/2026

Dear Muncipal Manager,

Since 2021 to date it seems the Caravan Park has been on the back burner as an asset of SWD and like many things has gone to rack and ruin.

I attended the IDP meeting on 13.4.2026 whereby we it was mentioned that the Caravan Park is for public participation comments as a feasibility study 78 has been done.

We were told it will be out for participation by the end of that week. It never came then, but much later and not on all platforms to notify us we had till 21.5.2026 to comment.

It appeared to be kept very low profile so it did not draw attention by design.

I went to assess the Park.

Staff are non existent. No cell number.

Its not on accommodation platforms.

Very expensive for what you get.

The disrepair is staggering and then came the storm.

Its a shameful site.

This is just another blight under DA leadership.

Suggestions. To get an organisation to run it according to all the rules and regulations as a Muncipal Caravan park.

That it be kept as one at all costs.

The

Municipality current staff have proved they cant run it, except into the ground so other options need to be looked.

A Caravan park is part of a community service as is a library and could be managed efficiently in the right hands. It should not just be about profit but more about service and standards to be proud of. The income will follow.

The bird life there is spectacular and home to many and rare species.

This asset has to be saved otherwise we have another tourism failure as was the tourism offices and now the Muncipal offices.

I strongly object to a sale and the present people running it.

Yours sincerely

Nancy Soller

My suggestions are that

Carmen Gaffley

From: Enid Williams <enidwilliamsza@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 20:36
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Notice A9/2026

Good evening.

I have been living in our beautiful town of Swellendam for the last 8 years and love walking past the caravan park in its beautiful setting on the Koorlands.

I would not like to see it turned into a very upmarket or downmarket estate, but I would prefer it to be kept and rented out by the municipality, and to be turned into a training centre for young people to learn trades but still be managed by a competent and professional business team.

Best regards
Enid Williams
Tel 0832309002.

Our caravan park: your voice matters before Thursday

The Swellendam Caravan Park has been part of our town for 65 years. The land at the foot of the Langeberg, under the trees, beside the Glen stream. Where families have gathered, where pensioners have stayed, where children have grown up knowing it.

The municipality has opened a public comment window on its future under ***Notice A9/2026*** (Section 78 investigation).

Closing date: ***Thursday 21 May 2026***

If our caravan park matters to you, please send a short letter to:

carmen@swellendam.gov.za

It doesn't need to be long or technical. A few sentences in your own words:

- A memory of staying there
- A family gathering you held there
- What the place has meant to you
- What you'd like the municipality to consider

Quote the reference: ***Notice A9/2026***

SPARC has lodged a comprehensive submission. The municipality has acknowledged it. But every individual voice matters in its own right.

Please share with anyone who may want to take part. The more voices heard before Thursday, the stronger our community's contribution.

carmen@swellendam.gov.za

Thursday 21 May
Notice A9/2026

Enid

Carmen Gaffley

From: Peter F Jackle <peterfjackle@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 21:23
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Notice A9/2026

We definitely do not think that the caravan park should be sold, but rather leased to someone interested and capable of improving/renovating it to be an attraction Swellendam and all visitors would benefit by.

Carmen Gaffley

From: Francois Rossouw <f.rossouw1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 21:37
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Notice A9/2026 caravan park

To whom it might concern.

Given the short notice period for public commentary, I will hereby give my concise input as a concerned resident of Swellendam.

It is my view that the acknowledgement of the inability of the municipality to run the caravan park in its current form is should stand as a point of departure to engage with public and private role-players in order to remodel the way the site has been run over the years.

I believe you will be motivated by the insights and goodwill and of the community to protect their cherished asset.

Many in the community understand that public land in such a prime location would never again be made available for the public to enjoy.

It is the right of tax paying members of Swellendam to expect that current public institutions should be competently maintained.

I hold the view that Swellendam caravan park is a high potential institution that is not currently run with a sustainable model. I also hold that the municipality should reach out to check the feasibility of a long term lease on the land with a profit sharing agreement.

The public must also be asked to contribute ideas on how to get the campsite profitable again.

It is concerning to me that the campsite is almost always empty when major events are held in Swellendam when no-one can find a vacancy in a bed and breakfast establishment. Surely this points to weak administration or lack of competence.

I am happy to be involved in any discussions on this matter

Thank you for your consideration
Francois Rossouw

29 Faure Street,
Swellendam.

Carmen Gaffley

From: Harry Prince <princeharry69@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 22:55
To: Carmen Gaffley

Please keep the Caravan park
Harry Prince

Carmen Gaffley

From: Philip Mathysen <philipm@bvsa.co.za>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 07:41
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Notice A9/2026 – Public comment on the Swellendam Caravan Park

Dear Carmen,

I'm writing to submit my comment on Notice A9/2026 regarding the future of the Swellendam Caravan Park.

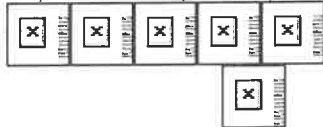
I grew up near the park, and one of the constants of those years was the activity it brought to that corner of town — families arriving and unpacking, braais drifting up through the trees, kids on bikes, pensioners settled in for the season. The park, sitting where it does at the foot of the Langeberg beside the Glen stream, gave that part of town a kind of life that doesn't come back easily once it's gone.

I support the revival of the park. Walking past it now, it's clearly fallen into disarray and is consistently under-occupied. But the answer to that isn't disposal — it's investment. The setting is irreplaceable, the infrastructure is already there, and the demand for affordable camping in the Cape is healthy. With proper maintenance, marketing and a clear operating model, this could be a thriving municipal asset again.

I would ask the municipality, in its Section 78 deliberations, to give serious weight to the option of reviving and properly running the park, rather than treating its current state as evidence that it cannot work.

Kind regards,
Philip Matthysen
Accountant
Professional Accountant (SA)

T: +27 (0)28 514 1102 | E: philipm@bvsa.co.za | www.bvsa.co.za
A: 29 Veldkomet Street, Swellendam, 6740 | [View map >](#)



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Carmen Gaffley

From: Rick Coldstream <truecoldstream@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 08:34
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Swellendam Caravan Park

Gooday

Further to your request for comments regarding the caravan park:

I would strongly suggest that the Swellendam municipality hold on to the caravan park and not offer it up for sale. It has a multitude of opportunities to generate income for both the municipality and a private local entrepreneur in a private public partnership. The town is short of every one of the very needs that the park can offer such as open air and environmental possibilities and most of all bring relief to the shortfall of accommodation, both tourist and part time residential.

I would hate to see this wonderful place sold to some other entrepreneurial concern that will benefit only a few instead of benefits for our town and people.

Here is a chance to get our tourist and environmental credentials up and running with a unique opportunity.

I have some ideas how to put this up for the necessary Public Participation so that it could be up and running by the end of the year

Remember that selling this Pearl of Swellendam could result in many lost opportunities as well as become a future headache for the municipality as any future buyer may not develop it in accordance with NEMA and other environmental legislation due to it being considered a catchment wetland and its close proximity to the river

I can be contacted for more information regarding the above

NI Scholtz
Erf 1014 Ratepayer
Cell 0713996385

Carmen Gaffley

From: lourens.vanschalkwyk@lantic.net
Sent: Friday, 22 May 2026 08:41
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: NO TO SELLING CARAVAN PARK

We have only been part of this beautiful town for less than a decade but since the beginning, felt like old and true Swellendammers.

While the current situation in town after the windstorm is fresh in our memories, we are reminded by old Swellendammers who fondly remember places, faces, and events of yester year that is no longer.

Nature can, and will change the face of the town in a blink of an eye and we have to accept, and development will take place, but it should not be the result of rush decisions, e.g. selling of property and facilities that are historically dearly treasured by each and everyone who considers themselves true Swellendammers.

Selling the caravan park will be irreversible as the municipality cannot repurchase such property once sold.

The municipality should act on behalf of the residents and as such, the people's voice should take precedence over short-term knee-jerk actions to address the shortcomings of municipal management (underinsured municipal buildings).

STOP THE SELLING OF MUNISIPAL PROPERTY TO COVER TO COSTS OF MISMANAGEMENT. Recover funds from municipal management bonuses and benefits (and NOT residents) or use opportunities to optimize the caravan park again as the well beloved venue it once was for the benefit of residents and visitors, and **DO NOT SELL.**

Regards

Dr Lourens van Schalkwyk

Psychologist

0836258300

From: Alex Hayn <hello@alexhayn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 09:35
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Public Comment on Notice A9/2026: The Future of the Swellendam Caravan Park

Dear Carmen and the Swellendam Municipality,

I am writing to formally submit my thoughts regarding the future of the Swellendam Caravan Park under Notice A9/2026. As a homeowner who specifically chose to move to Swellendam to raise my son, an active member of our community, and someone who has served on the panel of the Swellendam Municipality Aesthetics committee since January 2019, I am deeply invested in the long-term vision and character of our town.

A cherished memory and personal connection

My fondness for the caravan park goes back to the early 2000s when we used to camp there with friends. It was a truly unique setting. Sitting under the oak trees next to the Glen stream, it felt like we were in the middle of nowhere, yet we were right in the heart of the town. For 65 years, this space has been a gathering place for families and a quiet retreat that perfectly encapsulates the countryside charm of Swellendam.

The very reason I invested my money and my family's future here is because of the lifestyle Swellendam offers. I value being able to walk into nature directly from my doorstep, living without the daily frustration of traffic, and being part of a community where neighbours know one another. For 12 years, I have lived in homes without high fences, enjoying gardens that attract wildlife and foster open communication with my neighbours.

Acknowledging current challenges

While I hold the park in high regard, I must be candid about its current state. It appears to have suffered from neglect in recent times. I am aware there seems to be a lack of control regarding visitor behaviour, specifically concerning rising noise levels and excessive alcohol consumption. I understand that this is undoubtedly a significant issue for the homeowners bordering the park. Furthermore, I am highly sensitive to the fact that an under-managed facility likely presents income and operational challenges for the municipality.

However, the solution to these management and financial difficulties should not be the permanent eradication of the space or selling the land to developers.

A fading heritage and the threat of overdevelopment

Swellendam is currently facing a critical turning point, and the quiet, green spaces that define our town are slowly fading. We are seeing a concerning influx of modernised, gentrified properties that disregard the area's history. Developments like the proposed Oewerlust estate introduce a generic security village aesthetic, characterised by white walls, electric fences, and sterile landscaping. This type of high-density cluster housing is exactly what people are trying to escape in places like Cape Town.

To clearly illustrate the visual and cultural goals we should strive for, please refer to the linked document I created for the Aesthetics committee ([Aesthetics Doc 01 - Alex Hayn.pdf](#)). This document is intended to be a reference guide for the specific "Swellendam character" that I am referring to.

The pressure from coastal buyers looking for accessible housing must not dictate our town's development. If we allow developers to chase quick profits at the expense of our natural heritage, we risk permanently destroying the very essence that attracts tourists and new families to Swellendam in the first place. Streets will become nothing more than sterile channels between high walls, resulting in a transient community that merely uses the town as a stepping stone rather than a permanent home.

Learning from successful case studies

We do not have to choose between stagnation and destructive development. Other South African towns have successfully balanced growth with heritage preservation. Places like Prince Albert, Franschhoek, Stellenbosch, and Barrydale serve as excellent examples. These towns have implemented strict aesthetic guidelines and mindful branding techniques. They have chosen to promote a picturesque village environment. By doing so, they have boosted land values and attracted mindful investment without bulldozing their history for security estates.

My request to the municipality

While I understand the municipality has financial responsibilities, it also bears the profound responsibility of protecting the natural and cultural heritage we have inherited. What happens to the caravan park will serve as a clear indicator of the municipality's intended direction for the whole of Swellendam.

I urge the municipality to:

- Consider the caravan park area as a case in point for Swellendam's aesthetic. Instead of letting operational and behavioural challenges lead to the land's disposal or generic commercial repurposing, safeguard this space as a green belt that sets the standard for future development aligned with our unique character.
- Enforce stricter regulations against high walled security estates that fragment our community.
- Prioritise the preservation of the town's unique aesthetic over short-term financial gains, using the provided Aesthetics document as a baseline for future planning.

If the municipality fails to maintain and describe a unique aesthetic vision for Swellendam, it will be responsible for irreversible damage to our town's character. I submit this letter as a plea to safeguard our heritage so that the next generation has something meaningful to inherit.

Please note that I am highly committed to this cause and would be very happy to attend future meetings or speak about my viewpoints at community gatherings to ensure these concerns are thoroughly discussed and heard.

Thank you for your time and for considering the voices of the community.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Hayn
10 Koster Street, Swellendam

Cell: 0827712765

Email: hello@alexhayn.com

Supporting case studies for your reference

If the municipality requests further proof or if you participate in follow up discussions, here are several documented case studies and frameworks that prove your point regarding heritage-led growth:

The Historic Towns Initiative (HTI Framework): This framework outlines how local governments can successfully protect town character while stimulating the local economy through community-led heritage projects.

Link: [Heritage Council - Historic Towns Initiative](#)

Top 10 Global Case Studies in Urban Conservation: This compilation highlights international locations that successfully revitalised their economies by actively blocking generic development and preserving their historical charm and public spaces.

Link: [Urban Design Lab - Global Case Studies](#)

The Heritage Portal (South Africa): A dedicated South African resource offering discussions and articles on why protecting a town's heritage is economically and socially beneficial, providing an excellent backbone for defending spaces like the Swellendam green belt.

Link: [The Heritage Portal](#)

Carmen Gaffley

From: Priscilla Newdigate <newdigate@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 10:15
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Fwd: A9/2026

Dear Carmen,
Please maintain and keep the caravan park
It is a facility that is enjoyed by all the sectors of the community, here in Swellendam and South Africa, as well as tourists.
This should be protected and promoted as an attraction in Swellendam, it should be well managed and maintained, to make a facility we can all be proud of
Thank you,

Priscilla Newdigate
Glen Barry Rd.

Carmen Gaffley

From: Jacobus Coetzee <jakescoetzee5566@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 14:56
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Karavanpark

Ek wil grg my insig gee oor di karsvnpark. Die park is n mooi plek da moet nt aandg aan hm gegee word da moet ook n breekskade fooi in kontant betaal word j kry dt terug as da geen goedere gebreel is ni en op n naweek moet j 2 dae bly ni nt n nag ni en n buite seisoen prys moet aangepas word dnki

Carmen Gaffley

From: Linda Jacobs <jacobslinda100@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 15:12
To: Carmen Gaffley

Hi goodday

My name is linda

I had always enjoy to camp at the park with my fam.grandkids

We always camp for the weekend.its nice and quite.birds singing early in the morning .nice river

.threes .plants we enjoy ourself take you in the nature smell .

Fam can also bond with its other .family reunion.

I think this place is special for every one thank you 😊 🙏

Carmen Gaffley

From: Walter Stuart <walterborthwickstuart@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 16:26
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Proposal for the development of the Swellendam Caravan Park

Dear Carmen,

Thank you for providing me with all the relevant details pertaining to the development of the Swellendam Caravan Park. Please would you forward this submission to the Municipal Manager, Ms Vorster and any other persons that would be involved in the relevant decision making. I have submitted a few sketches to better explain my proposal but would be happy to explain these in person if necessary. I apologise for this fairly informal presentation but this is due to me only becoming aware of the invited submissions and the deadline this morning.

I am the owner of the property at 16 Van Oudtshoorn Street, better known as Morgenzon, since 2016. My wife and I have gone to considerable lengths and expense to not only renovate the house and the property but also to retain it's character as one of the oldest houses in Swellendam and the Overberg and as a Grade 2 listed National Monument. This status requires that nothing be done to the building or the property and we have been careful to adhere to these guidelines. Morgenzon was originally the home of the Secretary of the Drostdy and as such is part of the historical Drostdy Complex. It is pertinent to note that we acquired the property from the previous owners who intended developing about twenty town houses on the property. Thankfully due to the intervention of many people and organisations this did not occur.

We are well acquainted with not only the property but also the surrounding area which constitutes an important part of the historical part of Swellendam. You are well aware of the other important Cape Dutch buildings in Van Oudtshoorn Street.

You would also know that a previous owner of Morgenzon, Mrs Aletta Tomlinson, subdivided her land to provide for a site for the Swellendam Old Age Home. Mrs Tomlinson also played an important role in the conservation of the surrounding environment and through her efforts she was able to spear head the establishment of the Marloth Nature Conservancy, with senior politicians and the backing of Professor Rudolph Marloth. This achievement was sealed eventually in the grounds of Morgenzon.

It is with this brief historical background that I put forward some proposals for the development of the Caravan Park. There is no need to highlight the deteriorating situation which we have observed over the last ten years since this is well documented in your proposal invitation.

Our fundamental recommendation is the preservation of part of the park as a natural green area within the Swellendam historical zone. Instead of seeking temporary financial gain from its sale, we should follow the example of Mrs Tomlinson and think to the future of this ground as a green lung at the centre of the town. The attached diagrams would give some idea as to the potential adjacent land that could be consolidated to this end, also acting as a natural corridor to the Conservancy and linking up with the general up grade of the river and river banks, up and down stream. This would need thought and planning but would be of great benefit to the people of the town as well as a visitors to the area. In this regard the benefits would be compounded in the future.

The part of the Caravan Park adjacent to the Barry Stream prohibits that area as a building zone since it is below the flood line and by repeated personal experience is constantly water logged. I have been

restoring the natural vegetation below my property and adjacent to the river up and down stream. This area is marked as 'restant' on the maps and constitutes a significant hectarage. Similar clearing and planting in the area of the Caravan Park could be managed by the Swellendam Conservancy and other similar organisations. This would also be a good time to start following the devastation of the hurricane last week and the loss of countless old oak trees in the park and along the river. The sunshine will now get through the canopy to promote indigenous regeneration, as cleaning up operations proceed.

You will note from the diagrams that I have not included the more northerly section of the park in the indigenous zone. This could be retained, since it houses all the existing chalets and ablution blocks as well as adequate space for many camping sites. If this area were to be sold it would be crucial that the heritage organisations play a role to prevent the destruction of a such an historically significant area. If it were retained then considerable investment would be needed. Cultural and architectural sympathy would be required in abundance whatever the decision.

It is obvious that my proposal would require consensus from all in the area and would not happen overnight. It would serve as a goal towards which the town and its people could aim and would provide an asset at the end which would be worth a lot more than temporary financial gain.

I would be willing to help develop my proposal or present further information that might be relevant to its adoption.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Yours sincerely,

Walter Stuart.







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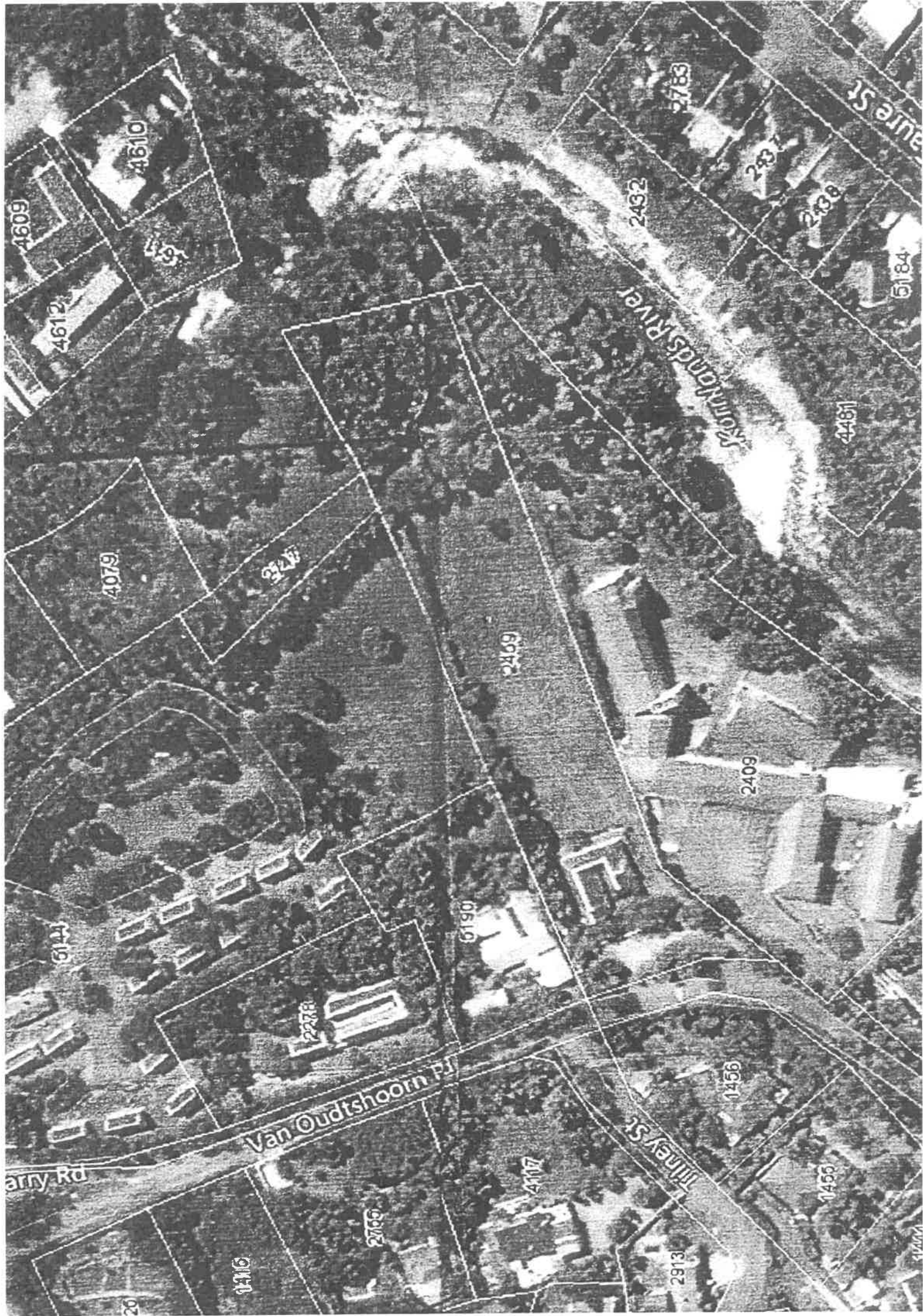
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Carmen Gaffley

From: Louise Erasmus <louisedubruyn@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 16:36
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Fwd: SWELLENDAM MUNISIPALE KARAVAAPARK. Notice A9/2026

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Louise Erasmus <louisedubruyn@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, 20 May 2026, 16:33
Subject: SWELLENDAM MUNISIPALE KARAVAAPARK.
To: <carmen@swellendam.gov.za>

Goeie dag, ek het familie wat al by die Munisipale Karavaanpark gekamp het en hulle het dit baie geniet.

Dit is so hartseer dat die plek so agteruit gegaan het. Ons het so pragtige dorp met soveel besienswaardighede, maar die toestand waarin die plek tans is, sal geen besoekers lok nie. Hoekom word die plek nie behoorlik instand gehou nie? Maak dan die plek reg en verhuur die huisies aan oumense op n langtermynbasis. Ons sit met n groot tekort aan behuising en oumense kan nie die huur bekostig van die plekke wat beskikbaar is in die dorp nie.

Ek hoop van harte dat daar dringend na verskeie opsies gekyk sal word.

Vriendelike groete

LOUISE ERASMUS

Carmen Gaffley

From: Helmut Kroninger <helmut@kentum.co.za>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 17:48
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Caravan park

Good day,

My impression of the Phase 1 process Swellendam has engaged in in order to resolve the caravan park issue is that the report is highly flawed and the impression it creates is that disposal of this municipal asset was the foregone conclusion. This, should it be implemented, opens the municipality up to accusations of either gross incompetence or even corruption.

I suggest that the Phase 1 report be scrapped and the process re-started with consideration of all the options and public participation from the start.

Regards,

H. Kröninger.

From: Braam du Toit <braamdutoit@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 23:49
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Caravan Park Public Participation Submission

To the Swellendam Municipality,

Re: Notice A9/2026, Section 78 investigation of the Swellendam Caravan Park

I grew up in Swellendam. In primary school our Landsdiens groep worked at the caravan park once a week, clearing the trails around the back near the river and helping with odds and ends around the grounds. We loved doing it. We were invited to take part, and we did, with the kind of pride that comes from being trusted with something that mattered. Our year-end functions were held there too, under those oak trees. I remember the opsigter from those years, a man who took such pride in the place that it showed in every cared-for corner. He kept the camp immaculate, and I am sure it was not because he had a lot of money to work with. He just cared. That kind of care is what someone brings to a place when the place itself matters to them.

There is something straightforward but easy to miss in how this works. A place that is cared for shows it, and people respond without being told. When the care thins, people sense that too, and behaviour follows the cue. The difficulties the park has seen are downstream of the loss of presence at the heart of it. Restore the care, and a great deal of the rest tends to resolve on its own.

The caravan park is not what it was. There has been neglect, and there are real operational difficulties. I do not pretend otherwise, and I have great sympathy for how hard it is to run a facility like this within a budget that has many competing demands. I respect municipal work, and the people doing the hard physical labour after the recent storms have my deep admiration, the teams clearing fallen trees, the electricians working at their own bodily expense to restore power to homes that had been dark for days. That work is often invisible until it is missing. What goes right in Swellendam goes right because people do hard jobs well.

But the answer to a problem of management is not the disposal of the land. The answer to neglect is the restoration of care. These are different things.

What makes Swellendam Swellendam is not only its commercial potential. The caravan park does have commercial value, and even more so when it is run well and given care, and that value can be drawn on in ways that benefit many of the people who live here, not only a few. The town is the third oldest in the country, with a rich history, a particular character, an essence. The piece of ground the caravan park sits on cannot be recreated.

The caravan park is land that belongs to no one in particular, and so belongs to everyone. It does not ask who you are or what you earn. The simplicity of the place is the point. It has held generations of ordinary life beneath those oaks, families and visitors and travellers passing through, and it has done so without distinguishing between them. That is not a small thing. It is one of the quieter ways a town keeps faith with its own people and with those who come from elsewhere too. To lose it to private hands would be to close a door that has been open for sixty-five years. Once closed, doors of that kind do not reopen.

Surely a sale cannot be the only solution. Swellendam is full of driven, hard-working, resourceful people, and it is also a town with a great deal of care to give and to share. When people put their minds together, willing to think outside the usual frame, solutions appear that no single office could have arrived at alone. A town is not a company, and a piece of land like this is not an asset to be liquidated. I would hope the municipality draws on the imagination and goodwill that exists in this community before reaching for the most final option.

We are neighbours trying to work out how to care for a shared inheritance. Please consider, in whatever decision is taken, what the next generation in Swellendam will inherit, and whether they will look back on this moment and feel that something irreplaceable was protected, or something irreplaceable was lost.

With respect and with hope,

Braam du Toit Swellendam

Carmen Gaffley

From: Niña Jochum <nina.jochum@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 08:00
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Notice A9/2026

Hi Carmen,

I've lived in Swellendam for the better part of the past thirty years - since the age of 9. I was at Laerskool with Mnr Wolf, Mnr de Villiers etc., and having come here from a typical "first world" country like Germany, till today I'm grateful for my mother having made this decision. We gave up everything to be here, and we both understand and know that we made the right decision as we would never go back.

With supportive neighbors like Mrs & Mr Mocke, we never felt unwelcome - even though I sometimes still feel like a tourist in my own country because I see something new every day. Even after the ravaging of millions of wild animals, the colonial impact of British rule, and apartheid mindsets over our people, there are still some things left to cherish, and that is our incredible nature. I sometimes feel like I came home - as the origin of humans has always felt to me like it centered itself in South Africa - the birthplace of existence. I have been very fortunate, as I was exposed to nature from an early age. I climbed and grew up under the shade of the very trees of the caravan park; school outings whilst exploring the nearby river were magic for us children. It felt safe and comforting to know I was surrounded by nature's pure, innocent beauty. This park, with these trees - some standing for over fifty-five years - is not merely vegetation. They are living monuments to this town's identity, creating memory and connecting us with the natural world.

The caravan park and its canopy of trees represent something increasingly rare in this world of concrete: a public, naturally abundant, and shared space. To develop this space in the name of development alone is to permanently sever a thread that connects nature and its potential to re-connect community to its natural surroundings. This should be a landscape that defines the Overberg.

One of my favourite internationally acclaimed photographers and filmmakers, Edward Burtynsky, in his landmark documentary 'Manufactured Landscapes' about China's urbanisation, comments on and bears quiet, devastating witness to what happens when human development is allowed to proceed without conscience or restraint. His images of destroyed forests, polluted waters, and industrialised areas are not warnings from distant lands - they are a mirror held up to every town that chooses short-term profit over long-term custodianship. Whatever happened to planting trees so that our future generations could benefit from their shade?

It's what they did back then, and even though they weren't indigenous trees, they were planted for this purpose. Why are we not doing the same again? Why are we choosing profit over our future?

Swellendam need not add its caravan park to that catalogue of loss, which seems to be devastatingly increasing and having a huge social impact on the town - similar to Malcolm Gladwell's Broken Window Theory.

Sir David Attenborough, whose life's work has documented the accelerating retreat of the natural world, has spoken against urban privatisation, and instead for the urgency of re-wilding and the restoration of green spaces for the benefit of the public and ecosystems alike. This is not a call for ideology - neither state control nor unfettered private ownership - but rather a call for a different kind

of stewardship: one in which public land is held in trust, actively improved, and made more alive, not less so. Marloth can be seen as a perfect example of this - M.E.R understood that the protection of nature needs to start with us.

Private development, however attractively packaged, tends to divide. It erects walls and fences where there were none, replaces the commons with the commercial, and severs the cultural and ecological traditions that bind people to place. In a town like Swellendam - where its natural landscape and community are woven together into a way of life - this risk is not abstract. The loss of a beloved public green space is the loss of a gathering point, a memory, an inheritance.

I wish to propose some different visions entirely. Rather than allowing the caravan park to decay until development seems the only option, let us invest in its revival. Let us ask what this sixty-five-year-old space needs in order to thrive for another sixty-five years - thinking ahead and planting indigenous trees for the generations to come, so that they can benefit from the choices we make today. Let us connect with ecologists, landscape architects, and of course the residents themselves about how this space might be actively improved: improving connection to nature, better custodianship, indigenous planting, accessible paths, educational signage, I mean the sky isn't the limit. We should be promoting and celebrating the natural order of things. A well-preserved public space always enriches property values around it, whilst creating a space positive for mental health, attracting eco-tourism, and deepening community pride.

This is not just sentimentality.

It is good governance.

The delusional world demanding developments, in truth, is a world that increasingly drives us towards decay. We need to collectively connect and recognise the catastrophic cost of losing green spaces. Cities and towns across the globe are now specifically spending enormous capital resources to restore what was carelessly destroyed less than a generation ago. (Singapore / Copenhagen)

Swellendam has the rare privilege of not yet having made that mistake.

I urge you to honour that privilege.

I respectfully request that the municipality:

1. Place a formal moratorium on any development activity that requires the removal of trees. Paying fines is simply not enough anymore — it needs to be stopped.
2. Commission an ecological and heritage assessment of any existing trees before any development application is approved.
3. Hold an open public participation process — accessible to all residents — to explore a community-led vision for the improvement of this space.
4. Consider a long-term management framework for the caravan park that prioritises ecological enhancement, public access, and cultural continuity over commercial return.

The eco-tourism industry is a trillion-dollar-a-year industry — invest in what matters, not short-term wealth.

Our children will thank us for it in the future.

As Jane Goodall always said: "Hope begins when people act, and the time to act is now." I'm acting - as nature intended, because I am nature. I'm not apart, I'm not above - I am.

I'm available to discuss these concerns further at your convenience, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute in any way possible.

A concerned Swellendammer,

Ms Jochum

Moolman Street 9, Swellendam
Western Cape, South Africa

Carmen Gaffley

From: Carmen Gaffley
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 08:54
To: info
Cc: Anneleen Vorster
Subject: FW: Public Comment on Notice A9/2026: The Future of the Swellendam Caravan Park

From: Theodor De Goede <theodordegoede@outlook.com>
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 08:43
To: Carmen Gaffley <carmen@swellendam.gov.za>
Subject: Public Comment on Notice A9/2026: The Future of the Swellendam Caravan Park

Dear Carmen and Swellendam Municipality,

Herewith is my comment on **Notice A9/2026**, the future of Swellendam Caravan Park and Swellendam Municipality's prospect to sell it.

I object 100% to the municipality selling the Swellendam Caravan Park.

The current feasibility study of the Caravan Park is not a true reflection of its value within the town. It is just a reflection of its current mismanagement and neglect. It is still a critical asset of immense value for our town. The prospect to sell it is shortsighted.

In truth, to see it rather as a critical asset for our town that can live up to great demand, rather than the misleading current feasibility figures, the Swellendam Caravan Park can significantly contribute to solve current long term problems our town is facing.

Selling the park will open doors for an elect few who can partake in prime real estate, who would want to capitalise on the ideal setting of the space, whereas maintaining it as a municipal asset can open doors for positive community initiatives, who are working steadfast towards long term plans to solve problems within our town. Community initiatives can greatly benefit from the ideal space of the Swellendam Caravan Park, and ultimately our town will benefit from these initiatives.

We are pleading the Municipality to please be open for conversations towards finding solutions to return Swellendam Caravan Park to former glory through maintaining it as an asset that benefits the greater Swellendam.

We lived next to the Swellendam Caravan Park, and from the age of 12 to 18 and throughout all my student holidays I had the opportunity to enjoy and be inspired by the Glen part of Swellendam. I have fond memories of the smell of campfires, the sound of falling tent pegs, happy campers that were made aware of the baboons coming down the mountain, and had to be cautious to close their tents when they go out to town, Marloth or Bontebok Park for the day, all part of the adventure. Even during the slower winter months there were happy campers when the sun can still reach them through the wonderful deciduous trees while they enjoy the evergreen lawns.

I was always amazed by the variety of people enjoying the caravan park, from bike-packers, to overlanders, exchange students, and prospective Swellendammers experiencing the character of our town before settling. I often encountered campers as they stroll down to the Glen stream. It is the ideal natural space connected to its vicinity where all people can encounter the character of our beautiful Swellendam.

Swellendam Municipality, please hear our plea, and be open for possibilities to maintain this space and establishment that can again enhance and promote the character of Swellendam.

Kind Regards,

Theodor de Goede

Architect

M.Arch Prof. | SACAP PrArch 34638364

THEODOR DE GOEDE ARGITEKTUUR +

079 908 7837

Carmen Gaffley

From: laurens@yebo.co.za
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 11:32
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Swellendam Caravan Park

Dear Carmen

With regard to the caravan park, I strongly feel it should remain a budget-friendly accommodation option in Swellendam. Whether it is outsourced to a private entity or remains under municipal management, I strongly believe it should retain its current character, especially the thatched cottages, as they reflect the heritage and charm of the town.

Every small town should have a place where people can visit without having to pay for expensive accommodation. I am concerned that Swellendam could become overdeveloped and lose the unique character that attracts both tourists and residents. Its history, heritage, and atmosphere are a large part of why many of us chose to live here in the first place.

When towns grow too quickly, they often lose their identity and start to feel like mini cities — as seen in places like Mossel Bay and George. Increased development can place pressure on infrastructure, attract job seekers where there may not be sufficient employment opportunities, and lead to increases in crime, pollution, litter, and the gradual loss of the town's charm.

What makes Swellendam special is the history, Drostdy area, mountain backdrop, the old cottages, the horses and stable areas near the golf course and the Hermitage, and the open, clean spaces where people can walk in the forests. These areas are already under pressure from illegal wood harvesting and increasing litter. Many residents are concerned about development at any cost and feel the town should resist urban sprawl and overdevelopment.

I sincerely hope these concerns are taken into strong consideration, as many ratepayers are worried about the character of the town being permanently changed. The Glen Barry area has unique and beautiful architecture and surroundings, and the caravan park fits naturally and beautifully into that setting. A different kind of development there could easily undermine what makes the area so special.

Kind regards
Leslie Barry
082-398-2424

Carmen Gaffley

From: Nomonde Bugqwanu <bugqwanunomonde@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 13:46
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Caravan park

Dear sir my voice for caravan park is can be keep to operate until 2028 if there is no progress then can resell it after that

I thanks you

Carmen Gaffley

From: Eugene Brand <brand.eugene@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 16:40
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Notice A9/2026

Hi

We live across the stream on the opposite side of the caravan park, it is a lovely quiet place where we can walk as a family and it is also a beautiful caravan park with lush grass and open space. We sometimes have guests stay there if we have a full house. We would be strongly opposed to any ideas of closing or selling for commercial or residential development since one of the main reasons we love the area is that it's a quiet and small neighbourhood.

Thanks and regards

Eugene Brand
8b Glen Barry Road
0798926765

Carmen Gaffley

From: Rebecca Musch <r.musch98@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 18:08
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: A9/2026

The Caravan Park matters!

This place is very special to me. I spent six months there in 2022/2023, staying in Cottage Number 20 with another German student, Miriam Allgaier.

I am from Germany and completed an internship in your charming town at Olyfkrans College and with the Municipality in the Waste Management department. I enjoyed Swellendam so much that I returned twice, in 2024 and 2026.

This cottage became a home to me for many days, and it was such a beautiful and memorable experience. Gin, the park manager, made it feel even more like home for us.

We are very grateful to have had the opportunity to stay there.

Additionally, the Caravan Park is important for the collaboration between the University of Education Weingarten and the Municipality. It would be a shame if this collaboration suffered as a result of its closure.

Please don't close the Caravan Park to the public. It's an amazing place to relax, enjoy, and unwind in Swellendam.

Kind regards,

Rebecca Musch

Gesendet von Outlook für Mac

Carmen Gaffley

From: Siphokazi Saule <siphokazi.azomila1122@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2026 19:30
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: Caravan park evening I'm siphokazi saule I think we can give 2 years from now until 2028 then we can see if you can give away to be honest Caravan park it helps lot of people

33 Soufietjie Street
Raiton
Swellendam
6740
21 May 2026

Die Munisipale Bestuurder
Swellendam Munisipaliteit
Swellendam
6740

Re: verkoop/Verhuring van Barrydale Leiwater/Swellendam Karavaan Park

Hiermee wens ek, Sidney Setiera, as inwoner en gemeenskapsleier, my amptelike teenkanting uitspreek teen die Artikel 78 ondersoek na moontlike alternatiewe dienslewering ten opsigte van:

1. Barrydale Leiwater en
2. Swellendam Karavaan Park.

My redes is as volg:

Barrydale Leiwater: Al die jare word die leiwater projek deur die Munisipale MIG gefinansier, insluitende die damme se instandhouding wat alles munisipale bates is. My voorstel is dat die tariewe net moet verhoog word en geensins aan n eksterne persoon/maatskappy verhuur word nie of om dit te bestuur nie. Ek spreek dus my teenkanting uit teen die pravitisering in geheel.

Karavaan Park : Hiermee teken ek my amptelike teenkanting/afkering aan teen die privatisering van die Swellendam Karavaan Park.

My redes is as volg:

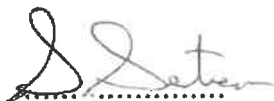
Die Swellendam Munisipaliteit het geensins toestemming gegee vir die Munisipale Bestuurder om so n advertensie te plaas nie. Die advertensie in die Suiderkruis koerant, Notice Number A9/2026 , is ook verwarrend, want ek kon geen konsep lewensvatbaarheidstudie op die webtuiste van Swellendam Munisipaliteit vind nie. En die persoon aan wie n mens amptelik navrae moes vra rondom die Swellendam Karavaan park, kon my ook nie help nie. Die vraag is eenvoudig: Op wat moes ons as Swellendam Gemeenskap kommentaar lewer?

Verder: Artikel 78 ondersoek is n baie duur proses, want jy moet op tender uitgaan en n konsultant moes dan aangestel word om die ondersoek amptelik te doen. Daar moes dus vooraf begroot gewees het. Daar was geen Raadsbesluit in 2026 wat die Munisipale Bestuurder toestemming gegee het om n Artikel 78 Ondersoek namens die Raad te doen nie.

verder wil ek die Swellendam Munisipaliteit daarop wys dat daar oor die jare genoeg fondse was om die Karavaan Park op te gradeer. Daar was n Toerisme Grant/toekenning van R1,5 miljoen wat jaarliks begroot was en daardie geld was gegee om Bed and Breakfasts en Gastehuis eienaars om hulle privaat besighede oorsee en in Suid Afrika te bemark.

Ek is dus ten sterkste gekant teen die verhuring of verkoop van die Swellendam Munisipaliteit se hantering van beide sake.

Groete.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Setiera', with a dotted line underneath it.

Sidney Setiera

Carmen Gaffley

From: lourens.vanschalkwyk@lantic.net
Sent: Friday, 22 May 2026 08:41
To: Carmen Gaffley
Subject: NO TO SELLING CARAVAN PARK

We have only been part of this beautiful town for less than a decade but since the beginning, felt like old and true Swellendammers.

While the current situation in town after the windstorm is fresh in our memories, we are reminded by old Swellendammers who fondly remember places, faces, and events of yester year that is no longer.

Nature can, and will change the face of the town in a blink of an eye and we have to accept, and development will take place, but it should not be the result of rush decisions, e.g. selling of property and facilities that are historically dearly treasured by each and everyone who considers themselves true Swellendammers.

Selling the caravan park will be irreversible as the municipality cannot repurchase such property once sold.

The municipality should act on behalf of the residents and as such, the people's voice should take precedence over short-term knee-jerk actions to address the shortcomings of municipal management (underinsured municipal buildings).

STOP THE SELLING OF MUNISIPAL PROPERTY TO COVER TO COSTS OF MISMANAGEMENT. Recover funds from municipal management bonuses and benefits (and NOT residents) or use opportunities to optimize the caravan park again as the well beloved venue it once was for the benefit of residents and visitors, and **DO NOT SELL.**

Regards

Dr Lourens van Schalkwyk

Psychologist

0836258300