

HWANGE

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE
MONTHLY e-NEWSLETTER

▼ June 2021

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HLB join forces to combat Covid-19

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) continues to work hand in hand with health care providers and various institutions in its bid to curb the spread of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in the wake of a surge in cases in the district.

Hwange District has witnessed a surge in the number of positive Covid-19 cases since the emergence of the third wave of the pandemic. In essence it has recorded the highest figures in Matabeleland North Province compared to other areas.

HLB Town Secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose said the local authority through its health section has intensified efforts to eradicate the infectious disease in Hwange Urban, which has since become a hotspot.

“As you are quite aware Hwange has been the hardest hit district in the province since the advent of the third wave of Covid-19 outbreak. As a local authority in collaboration with other institutions we have always been involved in efforts to mitigate the spread of the pandemic since the initial outbreak,” she said.

Pastor Mdlalose said the local authority has always been disseminating information on the risks of Covid-19 as well as ways of

preventing using various mediums of communication....**to page two**



A nurse at Empumalanga Clinic vaccinate a patient against Covid-19

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Council demystify land rates payment

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) is calling on owners of derelict land to expedite payment of rates so as to guard against repossession.

HLB Town Secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose said those who own a piece of land within the local authority jurisdiction were entitled to pay some form of rates in-line with the Urban Councils Act.

The latest revelations follow an uproar by some residential stand owners querying the local authority's audacity to bill them despite being located in un-serviced areas or having uncompleted structures.

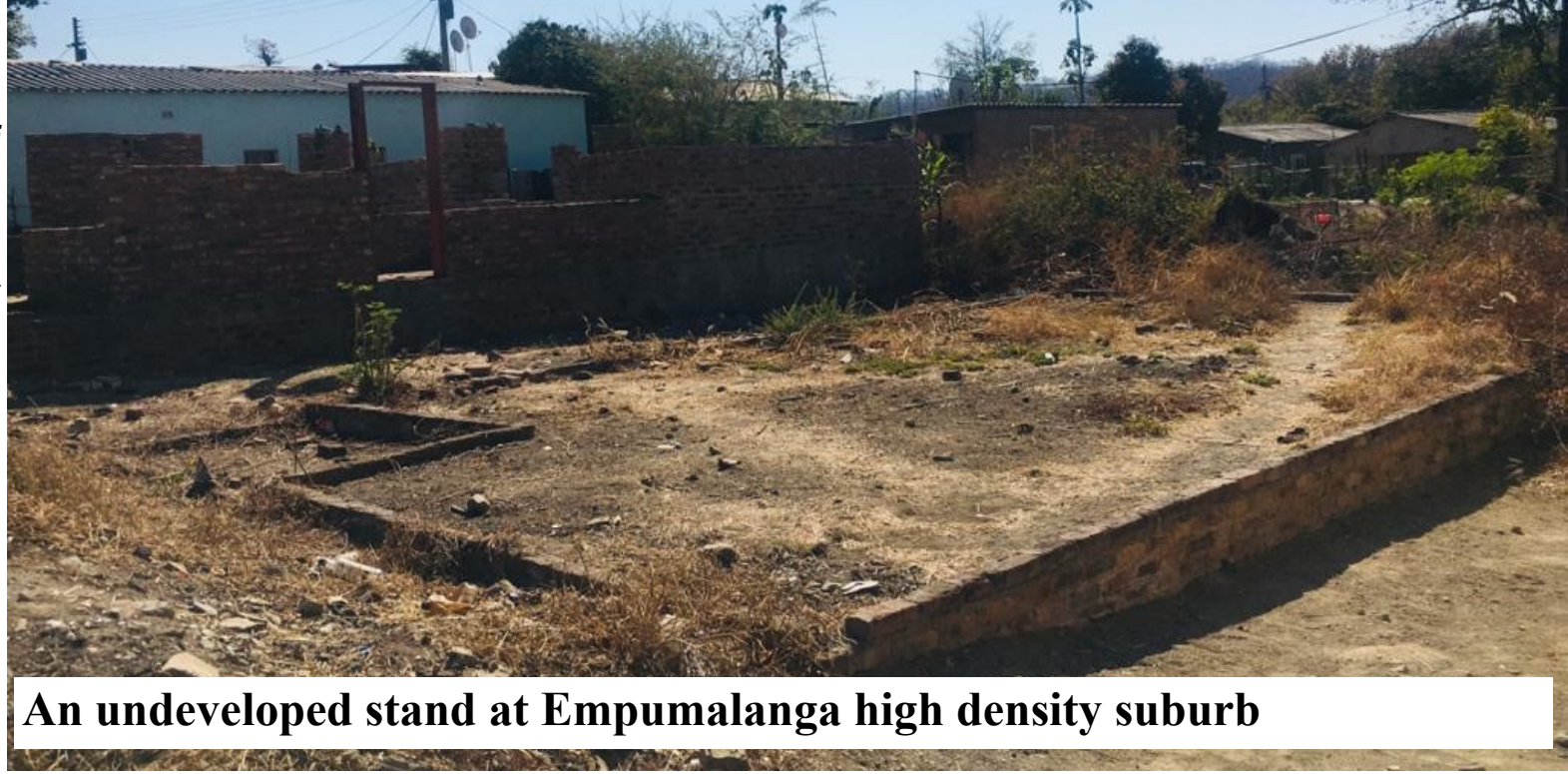
According to the Urban Councils Act section 218 all land owners are liable to be charged by a local authority.

"There is a lease agreement between the land owner and Council which compels the owner to pay a lease fee upon being allocated a stand, this is paid whether the stand is un-serviced or serviced.

"Stands with title deeds don't pay lease fees but are made to pay rates only and service charges while those with leases and are serviced should pay lease fee plus rates," said Pastor Mdlalose.

He further said if a stand is located within a serviced area the owner is required to pay for all the services rendered to others.

"Every stand should pay something to Council. If the stand is located in a serviced area the owner should pay all service delivery charges (lights, refuse collection, road and sewer maintenance) whether he has developed or not because it is deemed they are the user of such," said Pastor Mdlalose.



An undeveloped stand at Empumalanga high density suburb

Urban Councils Act: Section 218 Owners of land may be charged for services made available

Where—

(a) any stand, lot, premises or other area, whether with or without improvements, within the council area is

or could reasonably be connected to any sewer, water main or electricity main of the council; or

(b) a service for the removal of refuse, whether trade, domestic or otherwise, has been made available by the council to any stand, lot, premises or other area, whether with or without improvements, within the council area; the owner of that stand, lot, premises or other area—

(i) shall be deemed to be the user of the service in question, whether or not he makes use thereof; and

(ii) may be charged by the council such amount as the council may fix in respect of the service:

Provided that the amount so fixed by the council shall not exceed the minimum rate payable to the council by actual users of the service concerned for the time being.

The local authority is seized with the matter of an increase in the number of derelict land.

Derelict land is land whose rates have not been paid for a period of five years and above.

HLB has also in the past expressed concern about the high number of residential and commercial stands that

have remained under-developed for several years.

According to council regulations, if an owner fails to develop a stand for two years, the local authority can repossess it without paying any compensation.

HLB has the authority to repossess these properties as guided by the Titles Registration and Derelict Lands Act (chapter 20:20).

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HLB to take legal action against rate defaulters

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) is considering taking legal action against rate payers who are in arrears for more than three months as it moves to recover over ZWL\$100 million in its bid to improve on service delivery.

HLB Town Secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose said efforts by the local authority to recover its debts from defaulters have not yielded much thus compelling it to consider litigation.

“We have rate defaulters that have gone beyond 120 days and we have issued them with final demand letters and from our computation we are being owed more than ZWL\$ 100 million in non-paid rates.

Council is currently owed \$14 million by rate payers that have not paid for more than three months.

“We exhausted all other means to try and convince the defaulters to pay. We were then left with one option, taking the legal route because the challenge we have is that people are reluctant to pay,” he said.

At the beginning of the year the local authority embarked on various strategies aimed at recovering its dues chief among them being the door to door debt collection exercise but not much has been realised from these efforts.

Councillors have also played a part in sensitising residents about the importance of paying rates.

The non-payment of rates is hampering Council’s efforts to offer seamless and efficient service delivery as well as its ability to embark or complete its vital projects not mentioning its capacity to

meet its various obligations including statutory ones.

“If we had that (ZWL\$100 million) we would have done a number of projects which we would have seen us meeting most of our obligations,” said Pastor Mdlalose.

Empumalanga Phase I, Empumalanga’s DRC section and Baobab’s T-Section are the suburbs with the highest number of defaulters.

HLB join forces to combat Covid-19

...from page one

“Our clinic staff carries out what we call education information to patients and clients that visit the facility and since the outbreak of Covid-19 they always share information on how to guard against this deadly pandemic.

“We also place notices from time to time alerting people on the dangers of the disease. Our e-newsletter has also been our vital mouth piece in the fight against the spread of Covid-19. At some point we alerted responsible authorities on the sprouting of shebeens,” he said.

Through its Empumalanga Clinic, the local authority joined other health facilities in the district and the country as a whole to test and vaccinate against Covid-19.

“Our health section staff works right round the clock doing contact tracing and follow-ups of patients, disinfecting contaminated places, health education and public campaigns as well as supervising burials of Covid-19 victims,” said Pastor Mdlalose.

Pastor Mdlalose is also Hwange District Covid-19 taskforce committee chairperson.



Provincial Councillors commend HLB



Hwange Local Board civic engineering technician Tinashe Tapfumaneyi (third from left) explains how a fire hydrant works during a tour at Empumalanga Phase Four on his left is Town Secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose, housing and community services officer Mrs Runyararo Tshwapa and on his immediate left Provincial Councillor Chiratidzo Mudenda, Provincial Councillor Charles Ncube and town engineer Philip Nguni

MATABELELAND North Provincial Councillors have expressed satisfaction with the water and sewer reticulation project being undertaken by the Hwange Local Board (HLB) at Empumalanga Phase Four residential area.

Speaking after touring Empumalanga Phase Four Stage II Housing Project, Matabeleland North Provincial Devolution Councillor Charles Ncube, who was accompanied by another Provincial Devolution Councillor, Chiratidzo Mudenda commended the local authority for the work it has done towards the installation of sewer and water reticulation in the area.

The visit by the two provincial leaders follows an outcry from some residents who are saying servicing of the area has taken too long.

“As leaders we sat and approached the HLB management and what we have seen today is that the local authority has covered significant ground using its own resources.

More than 50 percent of houses are now connected to water,” said Clr Ncube.

The servicing of Phase Four stage II is a long-standing legacy issue date backing to 2009, when the local authority’s previous administration engaged a contractor who somehow failed to service the residential stands.

Through the intervention of the new administration, servicing resumed last year with the project being funded from the local authority’s coffers.

However, the completion of the project was delayed owing to Covid-19 induced national lockdowns and presence of a rock outcrop in the area.

“Some areas are rocky and they are putting steel pipes and they say they will be done in three months from now. From what we have seen I think this is achievable,” said Clr Ncube.

The local authority has since invited tenders for the procurement of steel pipes to be used for water reticulation purposes. To date over 300 houses and residential

stands out of 548 have been connected to the water system.

Clr Mudenda also praised the local authority’s ability to undertake the project using its little resources adding that residents should also complement its efforts.

“I must commend Council for doing a great job at Phase Four but there’s a need for residents to effectively complement its efforts by timeously paying rates,” she said. Adding that: “It’s really heart rendering for people to live in an area without water and sewer. People should understand that this is a capital extensive project, which requires significant amount of resources and bear with Council.”

Getting it right!

In our May edition we erroneously referred Miss Tariro Mukomana as the owner of Mukomana Trading. We sincerely apologise for the error as well as the comments attributed to her.



Council compiles vital statistic on land usage

HWANGE Local Board is in the process of collecting vital statistics as part of its efforts aimed at improving its revenue base.

HLB Town Secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose said the local authority was in the process of collating and compiling information pertaining to the usage of land in its area of jurisdiction.

“In an effort to improve on revenue collection I have since tasked all managers to focus on the collection of vital statistics to inform taxation, levying and other revenue streams of the Council,” he said.

The latest exercise comes against the backdrop that a large number of properties are not appearing on Council’s billing system.

Pastor Mdlalose emphasised on the need for the local authority to have appropriate information on the land at its disposal to ensure land-use planning, development control as well as levying its users.

“We started collecting vital statistics in November last year and we have covered significant ground. We should be having information about every piece of land in our area. This entails who owns it and how much they owe us because that’s where our main funds come from for us to deliver service to the people,” he said.

Pastor Mdlalose noted that the local authority should be able to track everyone who owns a stand or property so that it enhances its billing system.

“Without information that a certain piece of land was given to a particular person at such a time and whether it’s due for

repossession or the person owes so much and we need to squeeze out that debt we will not be able to deliver. We accept that we have a number of gaps and we are trying to close those gaps,” he said.

Council has also intensified infrastructure development control as part of its efforts to ensure construction of high standard buildings.

“We are also seized with the issue of development control. There’s supervision and monitoring of development as in construction works, to make sure we meet the required standards. So, that the properties that are constructed are of the right quality and as such it makes them resilient to all forms of weather,”

said Pastor Mdlalose.

Local authorities have a responsibility of ensuring development control within their areas of jurisdiction as enshrined in Chapter 29:15 Section 199 of the Urban Councils Act.

Through this Act, Council has the right to demolish any building wilfully erected without its authority and recover from the person responsible for the contravention the expense

incurred by the local authority in connection with such demolition.

It can also prohibit any use of building or land which contravenes any provision of the Act.



Town Secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose

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CORONAVIRUS SAFETY

Follow these easy steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Disinfect surfaces around your home and work.



Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.



Sneeze or cough? Cover your mouth.

Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work ~ Peter Drucker

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HLB's Sister Mhlanga: a distinguished infection specialist

LITTLE did a then young Sindiso Mhlanga (nee Dlamini) know that the moment she held a lit candle, reciting the Florence Nightingale Pledge, that she had not only graduated as a nurse to ensure the total health of her patients-but her chosen career path would take her to places she only saw on the Atlas while at school.

Sister Mhlanga who graduated as a registered general nurse in 1997 at the then Wankie (now Hwange) Colliery School of Nursing and trained as a midwife at St Luke's Hospital, Lupane District in 2004, is one of the few vast experienced and much travelled infection specialists in the Matabeleland region.

The healthcare provider is currently Empumalanga Clinic sister-in-charge. Empumalanga Clinic is administered by Hwange Local Board.

Sister Mhlanga's entry into infectious disease specialisation started at Hwange Colliery Hospital in 2004 when she was made the Infection Control focal person, only to be appointed sister-in-charge (Infection Control) in 2011.

She was in charge of the hospital and all (five) clinics and (two) dressing stations at Hwange Colliery Company Limited.

"I had exposure (as an infection specialist) while at the Colliery where I used to run OPDs (Outpatient Departments) wards as well as technical and non-technical areas. During that time I also organised workshops at least once a year where I would invite district health practitioners to participate in infection control issues. Apart from that I did training courses for Colliery staff," recalls Sister Mhlanga.

One of Sister Mhlanga's tasks as the head of the district's Infection control committee was to call for monthly meetings to deliberate on infection control issues in-line with national guidelines.

In 2015 she was part of a group of Zimbabwean health practitioners that joined others from various countries across the continent as an Infection Prevention and Control training consultant in Sierra Leone under the auspices of the Centre for Disease Control and Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN).

In 2016 while still in West Africa, Sister Mhlanga worked for the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an infection control specialist.

She was in charge of Moyamba District in the Southern Province of Sierra Leone, which had 105 rural clinics, one hospital and four private health institutions.

"Under WHO, during the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak, we conducted trainings and formulated a number of policies and that's when as infection control specialists we came up with a national guideline for Sierra Leone," said Sister Mhlanga.

An Ebola virus epidemic in Sierra Leone occurred in 2014 and 2016, along with the neighbouring countries of Guinea and Liberia.

In 2016, Ebola vaccination was piloted in Sierra Leone for the first time during the country's devastating outbreak that resulted in nearly 11 000 cases with some 4 000 deaths including health workers.

Sister Mhlanga reckons that although Ebola was highly contagious, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) is more complex and devastating.

"The fact that the mode of spread of Covid-19 is droplet infection makes it complex to deal with. The situation is made worse by the fact that people are not adhering to precautionary measures," she said.

Sister Mhlanga said Zimbabwe has made significant strides with regards to infection control.

"Zimbabwe is better off compared to number of countries in the continent in terms of infection control. For instance, in formulating their policy we were using Zimbabwean guidelines. Our systems are in place although we have limited resources.

"Infection control has always been recognised by the Government hence the existence of such a department in the Ministry (of Health and Child Care). At each health facility there's now a focal person for instance at Central Hospitals there's sister-in-charge infection control," she said.



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