



**CALM:** Ritchie community members at the Rietvale Community Hall where they met with Sol Plaatje exexecuting mayor Mangaliso Matika (right).

Pictures: **Soraya Crowie**

# Calm restored to NC town

**BENIDA PHILLIPS**  
STAFF REPORTER

CALM has been restored to Ritchie after Sol Plaatje executive mayor, Mangaliso Matika, met community members yesterday to discuss their unhappiness over the appointment of 20 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers.

Yesterday's meeting came after two days of protests by community members, who took to the streets and barricaded roads with rocks and burning tyres to express their anger over the appointments.

Matika, who is scheduled to launch a number of projects in the area today and also name those who were selected to work on the EPWP project, yesterday denied

rumours that 20 people had already been selected to work on the project.

"There are no names yet of the 20 people appointed to work on the project. We will leave that decision up to the municipality's human resources (HR) department. The hiring process of these candidates will, however, be transparent," Matika assured the residents.

During the protests, the residents accused the municipality of nepotism and being underhanded when it came to appointing people.

Two residents were injured on Tuesday after the police fired rubber bullets at the crowd, while 14 other community members were arrested and charged with malicious damage to property.

During yesterday's meeting with Matika, community members asked for the release of those who were arrested.

Matika promised to meet with law enforcement agencies to discuss their release.

"We are controlled by the law. If

there is a gathering we need to ask permission from the law enforcement agencies. I cannot give an order to the police on how to behave during such incidents. I will, however, speak to the relevant authorities to see how we can assist those who were arrested," said Matika.

He added, however, that municipal officials who took part in the two-day protest would face disciplinary action.

"Those officials will be disciplined as they were misleading the community and we cannot allow them to go unpunished."

**MasterCars**  
Used cars you can trust.

- 80-Point Technical Inspection
- Professional Vehicle Reconditioning
- Vehicle History Integrity Check
- Full Service History
- Mileage Certified

- 2-Year/Unlimited Kilometre Warranty\*
- 24-Hour Roadside Assistance
- 7-Day Exchange
- Balance of Volkswagen Automation Plan
- Vehicle Customisation

Visit [vw.co.za/mastercars](http://vw.co.za/mastercars)