

## Tygerburger (Durbanville)

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A vagrant could be seen drinking from a cooldrink bottle between the vehicles in the parking area in front of RustenVrede in Wellington Road. He works as an informal car guard. PHOTO: ESME ERASMUS Maritha Roukema, steering committee member who handles the administration, was not available for comment on the future plans regarding a CID. Uys urges caring residents to stop giving handouts, but to rather give to organisations such as MES, Badiso Trio and Olympians Social Development. "People giving handouts to street people sustain their substance abuse. This is one of our biggest challenges," she says. According to Hamlin Jansen van Vuuren from RustenVrede, the vagrants are constantly hanging around in their garden — drinking and leaving a mess. "They have become more aggressive and arrogant. If we ask them to leave, they just refuse. There are also a lot of new faces," she says. The owner of a takeaway business next to a liquor store in Wellington Road told TygerBurger that his business is being severely negatively affected by the vagrants. "We have been here for four years, and every year it has gotten worse. We need to escort our customers to their cars, and we are losing customers due to the behaviour of the vagrants. They come into our shop; they beg and scare our customers away," he says. Christie van Niekerk of Corobrik, who stays near the outspan in New Street, says several vagrants have moved in at the plein — some in Koeberg Road — and some have moved in with their partners and children. "Their numbers are growing and the area is filthy from all their waste. It is also a security risk to the area," he says. On enquiry by TygerBurger, Suzette Little, Mayco member for Area North, confirmed that vagrants were removed last Thursday in several operations in Durbanville. These areas included the outspan between New and Plein streets; corner of Columbine Street and Koeberg Road; De Villiers Road behind the Durbanville Clinic; corner of Church Street and Pampoenkraal Lane; in Church Street and on the corner of Gladstone Street; in De Villiers Road opposite Greenville Estate Wall and at Bella Rosa, Pasita Street in Rosendal. "This was a joint operation between the City's Social Development and Early Childhood Development Department, the City's Street People Reintegration Unit, Law Enforcement and Halt Security," she says. "The Street People Reintegration Unit does not have a mandate to forcefully remove any street person from the area. The department offers social services that are voluntary," she says "Durbanville has numerous street people hot spots. "Social services were offered to street people at these hot spots on three occasions over three days leading up to a planned joint operation with Law Enforcement last Thursday. "They were informed of the services available such as placement in shelters, access to substance abuse rehabilitation programmes, assistance with access to IDs and grants, reunification with family, access to Expanded Public Works Programme EPWP opportunities and relocation. "Should services continually be refused over the threeday period leading up to the joint operation, the matter is referred to Law Enforcement where a multidisciplinary approach is implemented. "The Law Enforcement Department is responsible for issuing notices of compliance. The police conduct screenings for outstanding

warrants of arrest, while the Displaced Peoples Unit conducts a bagandtag operation and handles the storage of personal items for a period of 30 days. "The Animal Unit is responsible for the removal of aggressive dogs owned by street people. "The Informal Trading Unit is responsible for the removal of items being traded without a valid informal trading permit, while the AntiLand Invasion Unit is responsible for the removal of illegally erected structures," she says. "The Solid Waste Department is responsible for the removal of litter and debris after this. "Neighbourhood watches and community organisations assist by patrolling areas that have been cleared and advising the Street People Unit if the area is again occupied following these operations. The neighbourhood watches also assist with the Give Responsibly campaigns around the hotspots. "The Street People Reintegration Unit follows up the operation with weekly visits to the cleared hotspot areas to deter street people from moving back to the cleared area, and to offer social assistance. "We cannot force people to accept the social services offered," she says. "Members of the public are encouraged to call the City's call centre — 107 from a Telkom landline or 021 480 7700 from a cellphone —to report any complaints or queries related to street people. "Residents and businesses are encouraged to give a handup and not a handout by supporting shelters and organisations providing support to street people rather than giving directly to a street person." Visit <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/deptsocialdevelopmentfacilities847> for more information. | What is your opinion on this article? Let us know at [briewe@tygerburger.co.za](mailto:briewe@tygerburger.co.za).4, wz 7'.. rTN: • .:1`IrdailL, VAGRANTS IN CBD: 'CARING' COMMUNITY OF DURBANVILLE TO BLAME .7,41114\*F" I. 'S. Vagrants have moved in underneath these bushes on the median in Durban Road, near the Durbanville Rose Garden. Clothing and all \_ — sorts of items, including bedding, can be seen lying around. PHOTO: ESME ERASMUS \_ AOC • ESME ERASMUS @erasmusesme Vagrants — some very aggressive and persistent — are taking over the CBD of Durbanville and surrounds. Numerous complaints have been received from residents and businesspeople in the CBD since December, says Theresa Uys, councillor for ward 112, which includes the CBD. Complaints of harassment have been received from RustenVrede, Oxford House and residents opposite the outspan at the Durbanville taxi rank. Businesses in the CBD need to escort their customers to their cars to protect them from the vagrants. In one instance about five vagrants aggressively grabbed money out of the hand of a shocked elderly woman who had parked at RustenVrede in Wellington Road, when she wanted to give one of them a tip. The vagrants ended up fighting over the money. Others knock on the windows of restaurants in Pampoenkraal Lane, harassing customers. "Especially in the past month there seems to have been an influx of vagrants. We are sitting with a crisis in Durbanville," says Uys. Uys approached the City of Cape Town's law enforcement and social services departments, as well as other relevant departments, to intervene, leading to several operations in the area in the past week in an effort to tackle the problem. The root of the problem seems to be the "caring" community of Durbanville. "Durbanville is known as a really caring community — one of the nicest places to be on the street and to receive goods, we are told," Uys says. This makes vagrants flock to Durbanville. One vagrant interviewed by TygerBurger at RustenVrede said he and others make money as informal parking attendants. He and a friend could be seen

drinking what was presumably alcohol out of a Fanta Grape bottle between the parked vehicles when approached by TygerBurger at about 12:30 this past Monday. However, they claimed it was only "grape juice". According to Uys one of the solutions to the problem of aggressive informal parking attendants is to implement paid parking in the CBD. According to her, some women handed out bags of bedding and clothing, as well as a cooler bag full of food, to vagrants at the Durbanville Town Hall about two Fridays ago. "It's these people who pay the informal parking attendants and who give handouts to vagrants, who are sustaining their unfortunate life on the street," she says. "This prevents meaningful intervention." According to her, meaningful change will only be possible once a City Improvement District CID has been established. However, it seems that plans to establish a CID have once again come to a standstill following the resignation of Dr Pieter Miissman as chairperson and member of the steering committee in October last year. He resigned after the steering committee failed to submit its registration application before the deadline for the third consecutive time last year. Miissman said in his resignation letter, which was forwarded to TygerBurger, that the member who was supposed to make the necessary adjustments to the previous year's application failed to do so in time. TygerBurger was told that two more steering committee members resigned recently.