

Dumping a 'constant challenge' in the CBD

HAZEL ALLIES-HUSSELMAN

Illegal dumping in and around the Athlone central business district (CBD) remains a big challenge for both residents and business owners in the area.

According to Ronald Campher from the Athlone City Improvement District (ATHCID), it is suspected that much of the dumping in the CBD area is being done by vagrants.

"Littering has an adverse effect on the environment, and resources spent by the City of Cape Town on cleaning up could be better used to assist with social services, housing, and so on.

"Many people are under the (misguided) impression that littering creates work for Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers and City council cleansing. This is obviously not true and very short-sighted. If you look at the canal alongside Bokmakierie, it is evident that the residents simply continue to dump their refuse in the canal as they believe that they create employment. We need to change this mindset," Mr Campher said.

Ward 49 councillor, Rashid Adams, said illegal dumping has been a constant challenge, not just in his ward, but throughout the city. Although he could not give an indication of how much it costs the City to attend to illegal dumping in his ward, he said the City of Cape Town spends more



■ Illegal dumping remains a big challenge for residents and business owners of Athlone.

than R300 million annually across the city to clean up the mess left by dumpsters.

"The City's Solid Waste department comes out to clean the mess, but the sad part is that almost as soon as it is cleaned, people start to dump again. We are currently running awareness campaigns at schools, and we have embarked on educational programmes numerous times over the years. We cannot, however, give up on this. I am also currently looking at all the open spaces in my ward, which is notorious for dumping, and are looking at ways where we can develop these

spaces to prevent dumping. Right now what is needed is education, as the situation cannot continue," Mr Adams said.

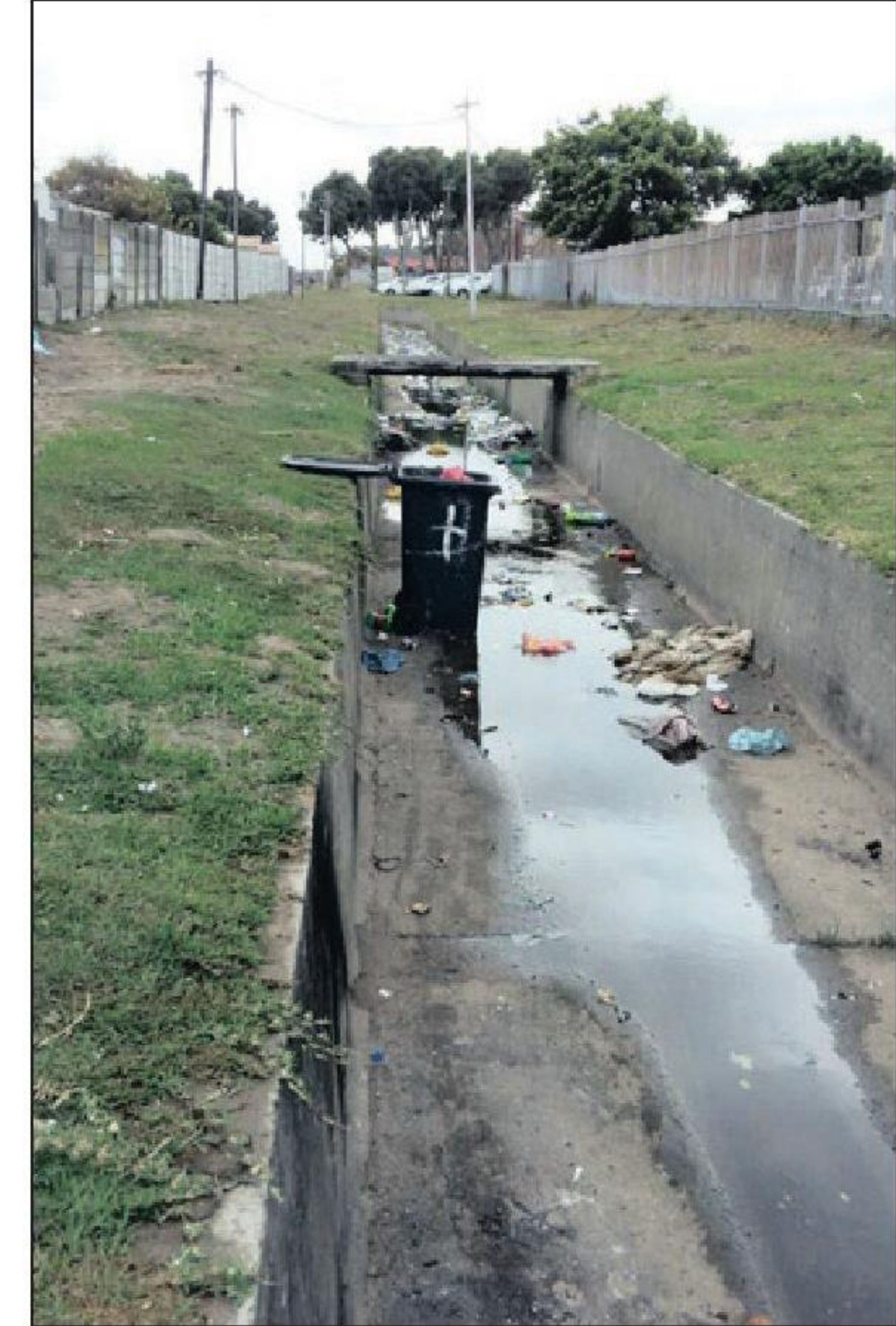
Mr Campher added that refuse stored in City-owned blue bags, which are being left on the side of the road to be collected by the City's cleansing trucks, are emptied and the bags taken.

Said Mr Campher: "Nobody, other than City of Cape Town Cleansing employees will be allowed in the Athlone CBD with blue bags any longer, as they did not legitimately acquire these bags. The City's by-laws regarding dump-

ing are very strict. For example, a peace officer may, without a warrant, seize and impound a vehicle used for dumping. People are also not allowed to empty those blue bags and take it. The bags are the property of the City and cannot be resold.

"We are doing our utmost to transform the environment into a clean, safe and vibrant one. However, the very beneficiaries of our efforts appear to be the ones doing their utmost (in ignorance) to reverse our efforts.

"Crime in the Athlone CBD has decreased markedly due to



■ The canal running along Bokmakierie, is often an illegal dumping spot.

the intervention and partnering approach by ATHCID with SAPS, law enforcement, Metro police, the traffic department, and the neighbourhood watches. The approach is gaining traction with all the role-players but the community still continue to dump, litter and buy stolen property, as well as stolen paving taken illegally from the CBD and other public spaces at night."

Residents can call the City's customer care line at 0860 103 089, or email wastewise@capetown.gov.za to report illegal dumping.