

# Residents tackle illegal dumping



Members of the community helping with the clean-up

**Over 50 litter-filled bags were collected by the residents of Mountview, Verulam, in a bid to clean up their neighbourhood and tackle illegal dumping.**

This comes after the waste laid uncollected by the municipality, opening up the floodgates for illegal dumpers. Councillor Johnson Chetty said due to numerous complaints received by his office, he invited Durban Solid Waste Education officials as well as area management to an excursion through the area on 9 March.

"The delegation was appraised of the dire situation and promised an operational campaign to clean up. Sadly, two months later, this campaign never materialised. Out of sheer desperation and lack of responsiveness from the department, Kevin Chetty from the Generation of Radicals GOR, a local church organisation, approached me to assist."

Johnson said he sourced the bags and personal protective equipment and gave Kevin the go ahead to institute a clean-up campaign in the area. "GOR utilised volunteers from

the local community to collect all the litter from the public roads, verges and pavements on Friday, 14 May, filling about 60 bin-bags."

Johnson said he is pleased to note that some people in the community are taking responsibility for their environment. "On the other hand, some people show absolutely no respect for their environment. Some deliberately dump their refuse at the nearest site without any consideration for their fellow citizens and environment.

"In a normal society, this is unacceptable and cannot be condoned. Residents will be exposed to eyesore dumpsites, unhygienic living conditions and various health risks because the municipal authorities are not making a serious effort in apprehending and prosecuting perpetrators."

Johnson said the ratepayers pay a stipend to hundreds of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers who sit or sleep during working hours with impunity because of political affiliations. "These EPWP workers were supposed to be utilised for the

purpose of waste removal. It's rather unfortunate that ordinary citizens need to pick up the slack since municipal authorities are failing them.

"The by-laws make provisions for a fine of R5000 for illegal dumping. In my term of office of almost 5 years, I never encountered any successful prosecutions in the greater Verulam area. I appeal to the people to do the responsible thing and desist from making our communities unsuitable for human habitation."

Kevin said as a community organisation they always try to assist. "Before the clean-up the area was completely littered. Rubbish had not been picked up for over two weeks. Another ongoing problem is those contracted by the municipality not picking up the rubbish."

He said four months before this campaign he paid four unemployed people to help him clean the area, "By the end of the clean-up we collected 148 bags of rubbish. This wouldn't happen if the municipality was consistent in what they're supposed to do."