

“Empty promises”



Etete residents at the Ekhalafukwe sports field after their protest on Tuesday.

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Every April for the past four years the Etete community protests over the same issue, the same “empty promises” are made and the people’s frustration bubbles over into violence.

On Tuesday the traffic on the R102 at Etete was once again brought to a standstill by angry residents.

Police had to threaten to use rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. The mob also attempted to block the railway going through the township but were unsuccessful.

They were protesting over the slow progress of a housing project in Ekhalafukwe in ward 20. They want their councillor Promise Dube removed.

“Our councillor has abandoned us and whenever we need her, she is unavailable. She is the one who was supposed to inform us of any delays,” said one of the residents.

The housing project was to have started last June but to date not a single house has been built. However, the failed promises and frustration goes back much further.

In 2014 the community protested claiming that KwaDukuza mayor Ricardo Mthembu and human settlement MEC Ravi Pillay had lied to them by promising that the earthworks for their housing project would begin in September 2013 (‘Angry

community promised houses’, *Courier*; August 16, 2013). They closed the R102 again in April of 2014 and 2016.

Last Wednesday frustrated residents closed the construction site of Motheo Construction Group and instructed the workers not to return until the municipality had met with the community.

“The mayor, Ricardo Mthembu, promised us last year April that at least 60 houses would be built by December. So far not a single house has been built,” said another resident.

The community were addressed by the KDM speaker Phumlile Zulu, human settlement director Themba Dube and Shayamoya ward councillor John Phahla on Tuesday.

Dube said the human settlement department had not yet given KwaDukuza funds for the project. However, the municipality had spent R10 million to ensure that basic services were there before the construction began.

“We need to ensure that there is water, roads and toilets before the houses are built,” said Dube.

Community members were not satisfied with the answers they received.

“We want the mayor and Pillay to come and tell us why they lied to us!”

It was agreed that there would be another meeting soon.