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NOW HEAR THIS! WITH **KENNETH MESHOE**

Why must we go to pot over potholes?

I WAS REPORTED recently that Johannesburg has about 10 000 potholes and that there are about 20 000 complaints received from the public about potholes every month. If there are about 10 000 potholes in the City of Johannesburg alone, I wonder how many potholes there are throughout the country?

The major problem with potholes is that they cause accidents. They damage people's cars that have to be repaired at the owners' cost, as municipalities and road agencies refuse to take responsibility for the damage incurred by potholes. Motorists have to have their car wheels realigned, replace shocks and have their suspensions adjusted regularly because of damages caused by potholes.

Potholes are even more dangerous when it's raining, because one cannot see them, as they just look like puddles.

I recently read about a car that drove right into a giant pothole and got stuck inside. "After much revving, the car needed to be pulled out with the help of roadside assistance and professional machinery".

A few years ago, a man from Mpumalanga was arrested by traffic cops for planting a tree in a pothole in the middle of the road. His argument, which made sense to me, was that he had seen too many accidents and cars broken by the pothole, which drivers could not see. So he thought he'd remedy the situation by planting a tree in the pothole to warn motorists that there was danger ahead. This, he argued, would warn that there was danger ahead. The police, however, would have none of this. In their view, they'd rather see another accident caused by the pothole than have a tree planted in the middle of the road!

Newspapers have been running stories about communities that have decided to fix roads themselves. One such story was about villagers who decided to 'pick up spades and shovels to fix the poor roads in their village".

Their spokesperson said, "We decided to do something after

delivery vans, ambulances and hearses stopped coming due to the bad roads."

"Each member pays R100, and the money is used to buy material like cement and concrete."

The question that arises from this is why should the people of Sasekani villager have to pay further amounts to fix their roads when they already pay their local authorities through their rates and taxes, to do maintenance of infrastructure, including that of their roads?

What should be done with local authorities who don't perform? Why should any one of us do the work of municipalities that we already pay them to do?

If you hired a painter or gardener, and they did shoddy work, would it make sense to keep them employed while you fix all their substandard work yourself?

In the same way, is it right to keep local governments who are failing in their task to properly maintain our roads and infrastructure, thereby forcing "us" to spend even more of our money to buy materials to fix roads ourselves? I'm just asking.

It was reported that a member of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU) in Vanderbijlpark, who says potholes on a road to his smallholding pose a serious danger to his life and his family members, has been threatened with arrest for fixing the potholes himself.

Is it acceptable for anyone to be threatened with arrest when they try to fix a potential life-threatening problem that municipalities are doing nothing about? If concerned citizens are victimized for trying to repair roads that municipalities have neglected what more can we do? I'm just asking.

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