AMALGAMATED

STEVE TSHWETE

The Time for Unity Is Now

Our promise to Middelburg, Mhluzi, Hendrina, KwaZamokuhle, Doornkop, Somaphepha, Pullenshope, Komati and every farm and village in between.

OUR ONE FIGHT: POVERTY & DISCRIMINATION

A word from our President

I live here, and so does every person standing with me. We did not come from Johannesburg or Pretoria to tell you what your problems are. You have told us, at your gates, at the taxi rank, in the queue at the clinic and at the water tanker.

You told us about taps that run dry for days and sometimes for weeks. You told us about streets that have been dark so long that people have stopped reporting the broken lights. You told us about refuse bags sitting on the pavement until the dogs get to them, and about a municipality that can find money for the wrong things but never for yours.

AST was formed because we got tired of waiting. We are not a big national party with a big national agenda. We are neighbours. Our one fight is poverty and discrimination: every street should get the same honest service, and every household the same dignity, whoever you are and wherever you live.

This manifesto is short on slogans and long on what we will actually do. Hold us to it.

Vincent Gwazela
President, Amalgamated Steve Tshwete

What you told us

Before we wrote a single promise, we listened. This is what people across Steve Tshwete are living with today, place by place.

Doornkop, Skierlek and Sebesho

Water is the first thing people talk about here, and the second, and the third. Thousands of households have lived with broken supply for years, and in parts of Skierlek it has been going on for more than fifteen. When the taps fail, families push wheelbarrows of containers to KwaMapimpane, or wait for a tanker that may not come. Residents have marched on the municipal offices, and they are still waiting.

Somaphepha and the villages

Somaphepha has gone without water for weeks at a time. The municipality has struggled to pay the contractors who deliver water, and it has had only a handful of water trucks to cover every dry area at once. A village cannot live on a tanker schedule.

Hendrina and KwaZamokuhle

The water here depends on a supply deal with a mine that was made years ago. When that arrangement falters, whole townships go dry. Residents are angry, and they have every right to be: a town's water should never hang on one company's fortunes.

Mhluzi

Mhluzi is the heart of this municipality, and it is where the anger is deepest. Sections of Mhluzi live with constant power outages, and cable theft keeps knocking the supply out again. The streets are dark at night. People are tired of reporting the same fault over and over. And a few kilometres away stands a brand-new substation that could have helped, which has never delivered a single unit of electricity to anyone. We will come back to that.

Middelburg town and the suburbs

In Gholfsig and Kanonkop, refuse trucks have been coming after midnight, or not at all, since the municipality's truck lease ran out in November 2025. Seven trucks are doing the work of twelve. Illegal dumping has spread across the municipality, and residents have had to sign petitions just to get their bins collected. In Midlands and Robert Estate, the power goes off again and again.

> *The problem in Steve Tshwete is not that there is no money. It is where the money goes.*

Where your money went

The Mhluzi intake substation was meant to strengthen the electricity supply to Mhluzi. The council approved **R30 million** for it. More than **R158 million** was spent.

An external forensic investigation found payment irregularities, procurement irregularities, oversight failures and financial mismanagement. It found breaches of the Municipal Finance Management Act and of the municipality's own supply-chain rules. The Auditor-General raised concerns about the contractor who was appointed. And after all of that, the substation is **still not connected to the Eskom grid**. It does nothing for the people it was built for.

To keep going, the municipality has borrowed more than **R700 million** from the bank, with municipal property as security, and it now repays more than **R60 million every six months**. That is money that could be fixing pipes, buying refuse trucks and lighting streets. Instead it is paying for past mistakes that nobody has answered for. The forensic report recommended action against the people involved. When nothing was done, the matter had to be taken to court to force action.

AST's position is simple: nobody who wasted public money should keep their job, and every rand from now on will be spent where residents can see it.

What AST will do

A municipality is responsible for water, electricity supply, refuse, municipal roads, storm-water, street lights, parks, by-laws and traffic. These are the things we can fix, and these are the things we promise. For each one we tell you what we will do first, what we will have done by the end of our first year, and how you can check.

1. Water in every tap, in every ward

FIRST 100 DAYS	A ward-by-ward list of every area without a reliable supply, published for everyone to see. The water-truck contractors are paid on time, so no village is left dry because of a late invoice. A fixed tanker schedule for every dry area, posted at the local shop and on the ward WhatsApp group.
FIRST YEAR	Leaks fixed before new projects are started; a leaking pipe is lost money. A permanent solution planned and budgeted for Doornkop, Skierlek, Somaphepha and the villages, with boreholes where the ground allows. A backup plan for Hendrina and KwaZamokuhle so their water never again depends on a single mine.
HOW YOU CHECK	Every water fault gets a reference number and a promised repair time, and the number of faults fixed on time is published every month.

2. Switch on the substation and keep the lights on

FIRST 100 DAYS	Put the Mhluzi substation question before council in public: what it will take to connect it to the grid, what it will cost and when. Act on the forensic report: the people it names answer for what happened.
FIRST YEAR	A street-light repair standard, with a broken light fixed within a set number of days and not left for months. A plan with the police and communities against cable theft, including marking and guarding the worst-hit lines. No unfair blanket cut-offs for whole areas because of a few unpaid accounts.
HOW YOU CHECK	A monthly report on outages per area, how long each one lasted, and progress on the substation.

3. Refuse collected on the day it is due

FIRST 100 DAYS	Every street given a fixed collection day, published and kept. Collections in daylight hours again, not after midnight. Illegal dumpsites in every ward mapped and cleared.
FIRST YEAR	The municipality's own refuse fleet, bought and maintained, so that a lapsed lease can never again leave the town with seven trucks doing the work of twelve. Skips at the worst dumping spots, and by-law fines for dumping that are actually enforced.
HOW YOU CHECK	Missed collections reported on the ward WhatsApp group are counted, and the count is published.

4. Roads and streets you can use

FIRST 100 DAYS	A logged pothole and road-fault system: report it, get a number, see when it will be fixed.
FIRST YEAR	The worst township and village roads graded and maintained first, not last. Storm-water drains cleared before the rains, so streets do not flood every summer.
HOW YOU CHECK	The list of reported faults and repairs, open to every resident.

5. Clean money, open books

FIRST 100 DAYS	A simple spending report that anyone can read, published every quarter: what came in, what went out, and to whom. Every tender over a set amount published with the winning company's name.
FIRST YEAR	A clean audit set as the target, and a public plan to get there. No new debt for vanity projects. Consequences for irregular and wasteful spending: we ask who was responsible, and we do not let it drop.
HOW YOU CHECK	The Auditor-General's report, and our own quarterly report next to it.

6. Jobs and a fair chance

FIRST 100 DAYS	Municipal jobs and learnerships advertised publicly and filled on merit, not through who you know. No cadre deployment.
FIRST YEAR	A local-buy policy, so that more of the municipality's spending goes to small businesses here, in every ward and not only in town. Skills training through the municipality's training programmes, with a fair share for young people in the townships and villages. Faster payment for small suppliers, because a late payment can close a small business.
HOW YOU CHECK	How much municipal spending went to local small businesses, published every year.

How AST councillors will behave

- **We live where we serve.** Every AST ward candidate lives in the ward they are asking to represent.
- **We come back.** A report-back meeting in every AST ward every month, in the language of the ward, on what was promised and what was done.
- **We answer the phone.** Every AST councillor's number is public, and every complaint is logged and followed up.
- **We will not collapse the council for politics.** If AST holds the balance, we will make the council work, on the residents' terms and not in exchange for positions.
- **Donations never buy favours.** Every donation to AST is banked, receipted and disclosed as the law requires.

What we will not promise

We will not promise to fix the police, the hospitals or the schools. Those are run by the provincial and national governments, and any local party that tells you otherwise is not being honest with you. What we will do is fight for this municipality, in public and loudly, at every level where these decisions are made.

What we ask of you

Check you can vote
Make sure you are registered in the ward where you live, and help one neighbour do the same.

Vote AST twice
On 4 November, mark AST on both ballots: your ward councillor and your party vote.

Stand with us
Volunteer, become a party agent, or simply tell your street the truth about the water, the lights and the substation.

The Time for Unity Is Now. Vote AST on 4 November 2026.

Where the facts come from: Middelburg Observer: "DA takes legal route against Middelburg municipality over financial irregularities flagged by AG" (12 Nov 2025): substation budget and spend, forensic findings, bank loan and repayments; "Midnight refuse collection and illegal dumping surge after compactor truck lease lapses" (5 Feb 2026): trucks and collection times; "Doornkop residents walk miles for water, often return empty handed" (6 Sept 2024); "DA criticises STLM over Somaphepha water issues" (14 Nov 2024); reports on Hendrina and KwaZamokuhle water (2025). Mhluzi, Midlands and Robert Estate outages and cable theft: Steve Tshwete Local Municipality's Masakhane newsletter. Skierlek: ActionSA statement. Figures are as reported at those dates.

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