



Brackenridge Estate Quarterly Newsletter

October 2017

Dear Brackenridge Homeowner,

A large amount of water has flowed under the bridge since our last newsletter and at the request of the Trustees a newsletter will now be sent out on a quarterly basis.

General Manager Introduction

The majority of homeowners who live permanently on the Estate will by now have met me. I look forward to meeting the “swallows” and up-country owners in the ensuing months.

By way of introduction, my name is Keith Miller, a semi-retired Civil Engineer and resident in Plettenberg Bay for the past four years. In my previous life I ran Group 5 Construction in Cape Town for 15 years and I spent some time in West Africa before retiring.

I am not at present a home owner and – in line with the wishes of the Trustees - I am not a Trustee. I have taken up the position of General Manager of the Estate. My mandate includes the function of what was previously called the Building Control Officer.

I believe that this decision by the Trustees will go a long way to alleviate previous fears and perceptions of a “conflict of interest” or “complete autonomy” by the General Manager. Henceforth the Trustees will be taking up a more active role in the running of the Estate.

Security Manager Introduction

Most of the permanent residents will by now also have met Wesley Andrew, our new Security Manager. Wesley used to head up Prime Security in Plettenberg Bay. He is still on the PBCPA Executive (Plettenberg Bay Crime Prevention Association), which in collaboration with SAP has done a fantastic job in crime prevention in the greater Plettenberg Bay area.

This gives us the added advantage of knowing what is happening crime-wise outside of the Estate which can only assist in combating and improving our “no crime” record going forward.

Wesley has integrated well with the present team and instituted some useful initiatives to improve security in Brackenridge. He is also fully trained in firefighting as is Ricky and holds a

Grade A Certificate from PSIRA, the Security Regulatory Authority, which last month gave Brackenridge a clean audit for Security. This should alleviate any concerns raised at the last AGM regarding the legality of our Security Operation and its functioning.

Dave Stewart's Farewell

A farewell for Dave was held at Ouland on the evening of the 28th September 2017.

This was a well-attended and successful event where the Chairman thanked Dave for his tremendous contribution to the Estate over the past 12 years and presented him with a gift of specially selected wines and a flight over Plett kindly donated by Stewart Lithgow.

We wish Dave well for the future and for leaving a very well run HOA.

Report back on the Fires

With hind sight being an exact science, one can safely say that the Fire Prevention Methodology put in place prior to the fires would, in most cases have been adequate to cope (see Fire Protection Plan dated 13th March 2017). However, given the extreme conditions experienced for the "perfect fire" we have had cause to reconsider certain areas of weakness brought about by the experience.

As a consequence of the above the following has been done since my arrival:

✓ Fire Hydrants

Two additional Fire Stations have been purchased and strategically placed on the Estate. This brings the total to 14 Fire Hydrant Stations. In addition to this "Cats Eyes" have been purchased and positioned at the stations to easily identify positions at night even under a thick smoke scenario. Fire Wardens have been given a Brackenridge map indicating these positions.

✓ Fire breaks

With the help of additional labour and outside hired machinery, fire breaks on the external perimeter of Brackenridge have been cleared / extended where deemed necessary and the Municipality has been put on notice with respect to the clearing of alien vegetation between Brackenridge and Maplin Drive.

To their credit the Municipality has acted swiftly in this regard and have at present almost completed cutting a fire break outside of our security fence on the Maplin Drive side with the knowledge that this indeed is still part of our property.

✓ Fire Drills

In the early part of August fire drill practices were held for volunteer resident homeowners and as a consequence of this, Phase Wardens for fire were appointed in Erica Heath, Bitou Glade, Orchid Valley, Protea Dale and Watsonia Heights. A list of these volunteers has been circulated to all homeowners and lists the key Wardens in each area who have been issued with a fire box key and Loud n' Clear horn.

In collaboration with Mr. C Fleischer, a Fire Wardens Emergency Procedure has been written as well as a Brackenridge Evacuation Procedure. These have also been distributed to all homeowners along with emergency numbers.

On 25th October Ricky and Wesley and a few key staff attended a one day basic "Wild Fire Suppression" course, organised by the Southern Cape Fire Association, which places us in an even better position should the need arise.

✓ Fire Skid

Trustees are considering the purchase of a "fire skid", which can easily be mounted to the rear of our 3T pickup. This will give us the versatility to douse the sporadic startup of fires that may arise when high winds blow embers up to 500m.

✓ Fire Fund

Please be assured that all monies collected in this regard have been disbursed to staff at Brackenridge (with the last tranche at the end of October). It was deemed prudent to disburse this money over a period rather than place any staff member at risk for theft etc. of a rather large amount.

Ricky and his Team

Ricky continues to deliver an excellent service with his team. We are pleased to tell you that his team has been issued with Brackenridge branded shirts and caps so as to make them easily identifiable on the Estate.

We will in the new Financial Year be purchasing a trailer for garden and house refuse collection instead of hiring one.

In recent times Ricky and his team have also assisted in a front of house upgrade and continue to patch the entrance roads as and when required.

Access Roads

The main entrance road to Brackenridge, known as Minor Road 7211, is supposed to be maintained by the Eden District Municipality and not by Bitou. We have over the past four months been in active contact with Eden and they have been to inspect the state of the road and agree it needs urgent attention. They have agreed to "patch" the road during November / December and place the road into the budget for an upgrade during next year but openly admit to lack of funds. We have offered to assist but have had no response other than a verbal undertaking to put it in the budget for next year.

Subsequent to this, and as Civil Contractors Henra were working on the Piesang Valley Road, we have managed to negotiate a good rate to resurface the road. With the permission of Eden, we have gone ahead with this and will attempt to recoup monies from them at a later stage.

The Servitude Road from Maplin continues to be the main access for construction vehicles and is also in need of repair in certain sections. This will be done in the course of our next Financial Year. Residents from Maplin Drive continue to complain regarding construction vehicles access and noise but in meetings we have pointed out that we have a servitude right in perpetuity. We have also asked all users of the back gate to be as considerate as possible and have recently circulated a memo in this regard.

FTTH – Fibre to Home

With the "backbone" having been completed at the end of July, we eventually persuaded Telkom at the end of August to start installing the fibre from the backbone into the respective

homes. In a good number of instances, particularly in homes built many years ago, this has proved to be more difficult than expected. Currently it is estimated that they are 70% complete with this task.

The GPON room is up and running and has been integrated into the central exchange and has recently passed all the QA tests required. Telkom Marketing have seen prospective clients in our Boardroom on 27th/28th/29th September and at present some 50 homeowners have signed up deals with them. All thanks to Leisle in our office for setting up all the meetings with clients over these days such that an efficient interview process could be held.

The expectation is that the contracts signed will be integrated into the system and the first fibre connectivity achieved in the last days of October 2017. This will be well in advance of any other such service elsewhere in Plettenberg Bay.

For upcountry homeowners there is a dedicated fibre help line, which has proved very helpful – this number is 0800 111 250. Please note that irrespective of whether you choose to avail yourself of this service, your home will be fitted with a connectivity box and intercom system linking you to security. This all comes as part of the package.

Also as part of the package, there will be a “web” link on our main webpage where each homeowner can log in for notices, updates etc.

Brackenridge Office

At the request of the Trustees the office has had a decorative uplift and a boardroom created for (Trustees) meetings and the like.

Leisle has moved to the front of house where her smiley face greets any visitor or homeowner. Wesley has his own security office and the storeroom has been converted into a records room with the kitchen area now being solely used for this purpose.

The rusted and leaking front roof has been replaced and the entrance pathway & garden redone.

Penalty Levy

We have managed to get Power Developments to cede any penalty levy decisions to the HOA in perpetuity. This comes about as their interest in the Development lessens and it means that we do not have to write annually for permission not to apply this levy.

Environmental Issues

✓ Water Restriction Bitou

Water restrictions are still in place as per Bitou Municipality requirements. This is despite our fortunate position with regard to borehole water, which we still continue to pump into the main system.

It is of interest to note that the golf course which pumps from the same aquifer has had in the drought period a 40% decline in water availability and as such are sinking a second borehole to maintain the course in pristine condition. One cannot take any resource for granted.

✓ Indigenous vs non-Indigenous Vegetation

We continue to be mindful of achieving a 80/20 policy and are doing well in this regard. Regrowth of aliens on recently burned sites are being dealt with as part of the eradication process.

Dogs on leads

Please take note of the recent email sent out in this regard. Dogs on leads at all times in all places and doggy droppings to be dealt with using the bags provided. Dogs to be properly enclosed and barking to be kept to the minimum.

Property Sales

Sales of vacant stands and houses have topped R70 million for the calendar year, January – September 2017. This comprises 34 stands and 7 houses.

A further 6 plan approvals have been given with construction not yet started. We are now fast approaching 180 houses in Brackenridge.

Finance

✓ CAPEX

Certain old IT equipment has been replaced. Chairs were bought for the meeting/board room.

Batteries for the second golf cart had to be replaced.

✓ Budget

The net surplus budgeted for the year was R638 000 and we are currently on track to exceed this.

Conclusion

All in all a smooth transition has taken place with the retirement of Dave and we look forward to another positive year in the development of Brackenridge.

Keith Miller, GM

(in full agreement with the chairman)