



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2010

UNDER THE LEADWOOD

Mike Joseph

To the Grietjie Community

The talk of the town for a few days from car repairmen to bank managers to rangers was the 44 degrees we had about 2 weeks ago. We all felt it no matter how macho or bushy we like to believe about ourselves. The funny thing was that everyone agreed about it and it was a common link between folk, something we try hard to facilitate ourselves but nature shows us up each time. Perhaps it's a form of trial, testing our resolve or perseverance. But we know from history (we hope) that soon there will be some welcome relief when the rains come (I hope there is no commentators' curse here!!). But we have no input into the outcome. We are not players in this game. The result is out of our hands (probably fortunately). I say probably fortunately as it would appear we all want more or less the same thing/s, yet we battle to get there, often thwarting a desired outcome through loss of focus on the goal and getting side tracked by issues that we could sort out if we all just TALKED about our differences but kept in mind our goal.

I saw a video of lions some years ago. These lions were for some reason at that time particularly incompetent/unlucky/whatever, but they just couldn't make a kill. Time after time. (Like 7 or 8 attempts) The video is used as a management presentation. The video shows how as the going gets tougher and tougher, the lions get more and more focussed on the goal. That's the point of the video.

It has been nearly 3 months since the AGM, and the SGM is nearly upon us. I think we could take a lesson from the lions. We should refocus on our AGM outcomes, and the goals as set by the committee for this year. By the way, the lions eventually made the kill. They survived. I often wonder if there was ever a sequel to this video to see if the lions learnt a few lessons.

Bye for now from Under the Leadwood.

Aan die Grietjie gemeenskap

Sowat 2 weke gelde het ons 44 grade ervaar, en byna almal het daarvoor gepraat. En maak nie saak nie of ons van ons as gesoute bosmens dink, maar ons het dit almal gevoel. Maar dit was darem iets wat mense vir 'n paar oomblikkeoor iets laat ooreenstem. Ons probeer as mede mens om so iets te bewerkstellig om sodanig oor iets te kan ooreenstem maar ons dikwels nie daarby uit nie. Die natuur doen dit heelwat beter as ons. Dalk is dit daar om ons te beproef. Kan ons maar vasbyt en volhou.

Maar on sweet dat binnekort (hoopelik) dat die reen sal val om ons 'n gap te gee van die hitte. In die spel is ons nie spellers nie. Die uitslag is nie in ons hande (dalk gelukkig). Ek se dit wat waarskynlik mik ons almal vir min of meer die selfde doelwitte, maar ons suckle om daar uit te kom. Ons verbrou die doelwit deur gebrek aan fokus, en die groot prentjie na die kantlyn te skop, en ons te laat verdwaal met heelwat kleiner voorwerpe, wat ons goed kon regkry mits ons net met mekaar PRAAT met 'n gees van einddoel te bereik.

Ek het 'n paar jaar gelede 'n bestuursvideo gesien oor leeus. Die arme leeus kon net nie enige iets te vang nie. Onbekwaamheid of swak geluk?? Herhaaldelik gen sukses. Maar die video wys wanneer dinge al hoe strawe en strawe word, hoe meer begin die leeus te focus op hul doelwit. Ek meen, 'n leeu moet eet! Dis die punt van die video.

Dit is nou byna 3 maande na die AGM en die beplande SGM is net om die hoek. Dalk kan ons 'n les leer van die leeus. Miskien moet ons herfokus op die doelwitte van die AGM en asook op die jaar se doelwitte van die komitee. Terloops die leeus het uiteindelik ge-eet. Hulle het oorleef! Ek sou graag 'n "sequel" van die video gesien het. Ek wonder of die leeus 'n paar lesse geleer het.

Tot volgende keer, totsiens van Onder die Hardekool.

Dear Grietjie owners

Below is feedback from the third meeting of the management committee which took place on Sunday 17th October, with one last meeting of 2010 scheduled in November before the Christmas break. Please be reminded that this is an extended version of the minutes for easy reading. You are more than welcome to review the minutes, which I can forward onto you by request. My contact details are:

E mail: andie@genafrika.co.za / cell: 073 255 9428.

FEEDBACK ON THE GRIETJIE COMMITTEE MEETING

Andie Rodwell

The GNR 2010/11 strategic management and operational targets: At the first meeting of the new committee in August, a round the table discussion was held to clarify:

- Where each committee member sees their role within the committee
- Each committee member's objectives for the year ahead
- The ultimate vision each member has for Grietjie in the future

Mike Joseph has taken the points made during this discussion and compiled the following strategic plan to assist the committee with staying focused on our goals for the year ahead. This document was distributed to the committee for comment, adjustments made, and has now been accepted on the proviso that the reserve finances are reviewed at the next committee meeting. Based on our financial status at this juncture, changes to our objectives i.e road maintenance, are to be made accordingly.

VISION:

To progress to the registration of a Nature Reserve

MISSION:

SHORT TERM:

The development and improvement of trust within the community and from thence a better community spirit, and maintain whatever community glue is generated.

A fundamental improvement in our financial profile

MEDIUM AND LONGER TERM:

An improvement in the ecology and the conservation efforts from which we can move towards our vision:

Firstly, by consolidating and nurturing the resources at our disposal

Secondly, by competent management with a team that is efficient, as well as effective in matters of farm management, conservation, security and administration, supported and nurtured by progressive leadership in the process

Thirdly, by an overall improvement in our constituted membership platform to reach as a first step- that percentage which is required to qualify for Nature Reserve Status.

OBJECTIVES (Mainly 2010/2011)

(These are in no hierarchical order, neither is there any notation of importance due to numbering)

1. Achieve a paid membership ratio of 70%
2. Achieve at least a 70% payment from members of the basic charge levy
3. Achieve at least 30% basic charge levy from non-members
4. Achieve another 5% of budget from services in lieu of levies
5. Improve constituted members by 12 (either way)
6. Launch volunteer program successfully
7. Grade and top the gravel roads at least once in the financial year as well as improve the runoff system of bolsters
8. Repair (lengthways) at least 33% of Maggie's Hill
9. Complete the ring fence
10. Improve the community cohesion (soft target); better PR etc
11. Improve our comms and relations with neighbours especially Balule (soft target)
12. Link budgets to the 5 year plan; on the basis of this set of objectives, a review of 5 year plan (both wording and projects) should be undertaken to plan forward for 2011/12 to include projects in the budget. To be finalised through committee meetings by February 2011.
13. Improve the access security through gate and therefore on GNR by the implementation of an entry and exit permit system that functions efficiently. By end November 2010.
14. As a committee to be less reactive and more pre-emptive.
15. A review of the constitution to bring all changes in, and make it up to date. Instigate a critical review of the constitution (drawn up some years ago) in relation to the current set of needs and circumstances.

The committee is mandated to re-visit this document on a regular basis.

Proposal and Action plan from the 'Dissatisfied Grietjie Landowners' (DGLO's): At the previous committee meeting held in September, Deon Nieuwoudt, as representative of those Grietjie owners dissatisfied with the current management structures (DGLO's) tabled a list of queries for clarification by the committee. Each committee member has, in the interim, answered these questions, and forwarded them to Mike Joseph who has formulated a cohesive response. Below, in the spirit of opening communications to all Grietjie owners, is the committees' reply:

1. Recognition of the Grietjie Land Owners rights as title deed holders. Even if they aren't contributing and aren't members of the constitution the Grietjie Committee has no powers over their property and this should be respected. They will in turn co-operate with the committee and support it where necessary. Currently this sector of Grietjie is totally ignored.

We recognise absolutely the freehold nature of ownership on Grietjie and this is not in question. But we need a bit of quid pro quo here. If the reserve is to function properly, it is difficult to carry out proper management functions unless we have some latitude from the respective owners. Obviously there is the need to get permission, but it would be nice if this was "standing" and not on an ad-hoc basis. And the reserve obviously needs to guard against unnecessary damage to a property, and if this does occur, it should be made good. It is also desirable that first of all "illegal" developments which contravene local, provincial and national regulations should be challenged, and secondly, that developments which would have negative consequences to the reserve as a whole should be challenged. This is the quid pro quo. If we all want a reserve, then we also need to be sensitive to the attitude that "it is my land and I can do what I want" may not be good for the overall future of the reserve, and this may be seen affecting a landowner's rights, but if there is genuine desire from the DGLO for a Nature Reserve, then we should understand the give and take required in these instances. Obviously discussion and communication would help, but if it's done on the basis of "winner takes all" or "take it or leave it" we get nowhere. We need to reach acceptable solutions for all, without the extreme entrenched positions often adopted.

2. A management committee that has credibility and the members must represent the Geo-Political diversity of Grietjie. The members must be resident on Grietjie for more than half the year. (Afrikaans, English, Male, Female).

I think it is imperative that our committee should have credibility and we really are trying to get to this point. We have no choice as to whom or whom not should be on the committee. They are nominated and elected at the AGM. It would be unfair to exclude someone purely because he/she is non-resident. Each member of the association has as much right to be on the committee as anybody else, and any other stance would be unconstitutional. However, if more people were members in good standing, then those people who were required to be represented could be elected. So it would then be possible to elect only residents, BY VOTE, but not by exclusion of non-residents. Of course you know that committee members serve without any remuneration of any sorts, and getting enough willing, able and ready bodies to serve is always a challenge. You will also acknowledge that the makeup of the committee this year, also with the inclusion of Theuns Trollip tried informally to accommodate more fully the "geo-political" diversity of Grietjie. I am of course personally worried about the term political, but I take it in the spirit I believe it was intended.

3. Furthermore when a committee member is nominated and has a seat on the committee he/she can not be replaced by any other member unless the Grietjie Members have nominated and voted them on.

This is correct; and as in the bigger political landscape, when a MP eg resigns there is a by-election. The logistics of this is a bit more difficult for Grietjie but it could be arranged as an SGM, but this is a rare-ish event. The constitution does however make allowance for co-opting someone onto the committee. As such Theuns Trollip now will not have voting rights but is a co-opted member of the committee. It is also possible to have someone attend as proxy as the member may not be available. This happened twice last year, once for an extended period for Andie Rodwell due Mark's business in Botswana. And Andie did not have a vote on the committee; it had to come from Mark. We would appreciate a proposal on how we deal with this type of scenario, without the necessity for an SGM.

4. Visible Reserve Management (Patrolling , Inspections and Random Road Blocks)

Patrols happen regularly on the reserve. These and inspections are recorded in the wardens monthly report. The issues of roadblocks and searching have legal consequences, and permission and presence of SAPS might be required. Vehicles ARE searched if suspected but for now that has to be done with the driver's permission. Roadblocks might infringe on an owner's rights in terms of the legality of a roadblock by us on his servitude. However, if we had more members signed up and this was enough for a nature reserve this could be more feasible, and even better if EVERYBODY bought into this. One more point, we are very limited staff wise. If we had more paying members, perhaps this and all sorts of other things might become possible.

5. Effective Reserve Management. Management Committee, Reserve Manager (Member of Committee that supervises the rest of the personnel , which are the Ranger, Secretary, Gate Guards, Rangers, Fencing Team, Labour gang.

This would be nice but requires the necessary funding which can only come from a bigger paying base, or a larger levy (or both) or game revenue (leave this for now as is the subject of the SGM later on). For now we work with what we have who, other than Tim and his staff, are all volunteers. From a line point of view, this year I have taken on the role as I believe is envisaged in our point, and I meet regularly with Tim, at least once or twice a week, and we discuss many things reserve/labour wise.

6. Proper Game Management. (Grass Classification and Grazing volumes determined, Accurate Game Counts/Census, Animal Population Control).

Much of this already happens. Perhaps we could do more but it comes down to a funding issue. There exists a management plan for the reserve. Perhaps we should revisit this and publish it in a newsletter. But all anyone needs to do is contact the warden who can discuss with the person the ins and outs thereof. Perhaps as our communication improves this will be remedied?? As far as animal population control, again this is subject of the SGM. Currently we are allowed live capture which we try. As you know we are currently negotiating the sale of 2 buffalo as live capture.

7. Trade in Game (Dead or Alive) to attain correct animal densities or populations and to earn funds to alleviate the high levies.

I would prefer not to enter this debate for now. It is for the SGM. However, there seems to be at least an ecological awareness that culling is necessary, when it is so indicated by scientifically sound data. Of course there is a whole can of worms as far as insurance, and your opening point of the right of individual owners etc that will need wading through to formulate a proposal for the SGM. But let's leave this point for later. (This I guess would be one of the "deeper" issues I referred to earlier on.

8. A reasonable and affordable annual levy.

Deon, everybody would like a lower levy. However, at whatever level they are set, they will be unaffordable and unreasonable to someone. What we are trying to do this year is widening the base of contribution so that the levies are spread to more people at a lower level. But there are expenses and a budget to be met, and other than hunting/ selling game (a subject for SGM), I would REALLY like to see (and I guess Scott would jump for joy) suggestions that work that would make the funding of the budget a reality. Lower levies, if they result in a lower budget, will impact seriously on our ability to manage the reserve at the current level, never mind about the level at which the DGLO would like to see it managed in their concerns. I just am personally (other than hunting to balance books which could kill the goose that lays the golden egg) at a dead end for other normal fund raisers. We have suggested a concert later, there were groans by some parties, we suggest sale of buffalo, we get abused verbally very seriously (I won't mention by whom) for this. I think we would all like to wave a magic wand here, but my sjambok ayisenbezi njenga lowo.

9. The provision of services and material in exchange for the levies

Point 9 is already on the go.

10. The payment of a conservation fee by each visitor of a lodge. Grietjie monthly invoices the lodges with the fee applicable to the number of visitors. In this way the lodges pay Conservation Fees according to their customers population.

We await a proposal in this regard or the maintenance of the current status quo. As soon as we have an answer, I will revert back. This was brought up last year but so far has not been finalised. I hope this will be finalised soon

11. The introduction of a fee/deposit for contractors building on Grietjie. Determined monthly for the duration of the project paid in advance per full month, about R50-00/week.

Please let us have proposal as to how we could implement this as we cannot receive money at the gate. We would have to recover from the owner, who would probably be charged extra by the contractor. But please let's see if this is feasible. Ask your constituent for a plan?? Thanks

12. A Grietjie Radio network with 3 channels. (Public channel, Security/Fire /Gate Alert channel and Rangers channel).All on one frequency. GRN Gate Base Station, Vehicle Mobile Unit, Two Hand Held Units. Everybody Else has mobile or Hand Held or a Base Station on Same Frequency. No mast is required.

This is not a new idea and has been submitted previously with little positive response due to costs. Again costs. Nice, but how to fund it. Would we need extra staff?? Your requirement for lower levies would hinder our ability to do this. We have been advised that there is a spare license at Balule which they're prepared to let us have but we would have to pay the annual fee. That's not the big issue – it's the infrastructure that would be expensive. Again, can your constituents offer a more feasible plan to see how we could implement this?

13. Northern Fence completion.

This is in hand but we have to wait for funding from Balule (agreed for next year).This is a funding issue. If EVERYONE paid we could do the fence now. Tim can give all the quotes etc. We know how much we need. But we don't have the resources, manpower or finances to do it quickly. And Harrops is almost outrageous.

14. Application for Nature Reserve Status to alleviate Municipal Land Rate Levies.

We all agree on this. We need 75% membership which we do not have as yet. There is also the land claims issue for resolving. Andie has agreed to give us an update of the land claim issue soon. But we need resolution on both factors first. So the more DGLO's who sign up, that's 1 nail down on this issue (as well as all the other benefits that could accrue as a result of this status).

15. A Land Claims Member on the Committee to Co-ordinate the Land Claim issues.

Andie serves as secretary on both committees and therefore is a meaningful link here.

16. The upgrade of the Vulture hide so that it can be opened. Funds generated by the hide must be repaid to Grietjie. Grietjie can provide the small game Carcasses (Impala and warthog) as part of its animal population control program.

The VR is not a GNR initiative. It is a BirdLife SA one. We do receive a commission from entries when it is functioning. This is in support of our roads maintenance. The VR is at a standstill right now as Balule insists on it being fenced off. Ian is dealing with this and he has been asked to give us a time line for finalisation of this project. The provision of carcasses for the VR would have to tie in with the correct scientific animal reduction program IF ANY and therefore cannot be guaranteed (again review point on culling at SGM). The provision of only impala and warthog may not be suitable if the need is for offtake of another species IF ANY. But a point for discussion.

17. What happened to the money in the road fund started in and around 1998?

Some of the fund was refunded by request of certain donors. The money that was left was allocated to recent road repairs. For now, the road repairs were paid out of current funds, and the existing approx R25000 in the savings account has recently been allocated for another grading but this time on certain sections that will need topping.

18. What happened at Grietjie no 3 (Mr. Stephan Lucas)?

We have no comment here. For the record, whilst there MAY be a communication issue here. No-one really knows what the issue is so Andie cannot communicate that which she doesn't know anything about. Nonetheless, is this a red herring as how will this address the concerns of the DGLO in connection with GNR?

19. What happened with the paying Student that didn't complete his stay?

This is in the AGM minutes in the chairman's report. But for the record, the guy basically got bored and opted out. We refunded a portion of his fee; but we still recorded revenue of about R4500 or so. (Don't quote me here).

20. When will Nature Conservation put an end to the feeding of Baboons at Care?

CARE is not a member of GNR. We have to respect her landowner rights as per your point 1. However, any person can bring this in his own right to the attention of Nature Conservation. CARE is registered. Whilst we may not agree with CARE as it now stands, we have to acknowledge that other reserve people feed wild animals. So whilst it's easy to point fingers at CARE, perhaps we should also get our own house in order.

21. Is it acceptable that the Warden uses the official vehicle for private transport to town.(When is it for Business and when is it Private?)

The warden generally does a very good job at trying to keep our expenses in check and never displays anything less than utmost care with the reserve's funds or resources. Due to his working hours, 25 days on, 4 days off, he often has no time for personal business. It was agreed by a previous committee that when he's in town on official Grietjie business he can combine this with his need to buy food/kit etc for staff, or to do his banking etc. We are all aware of the relatively unflamboyant salary earned by our warden, so all things considered, we should approach this with sensitivity. In terms of the issues we need to deal with, perhaps we should try deal with issues that have a material impact on resolving the differences between DGLO and the constituted members.

22. Currently the Grietjie Setup only benefits the privileged few.

It would help if there was a bit more meat on this point. It is very vague and full of innuendo. If there is a specific accusation, bring it out so we can respond in a meaningful way. It is generally accepted that everybody has benefitted from increased land prices as a result of the "reserve" philosophy over the last decade or so. Without being polemic, there is a school of thought amongst the members of the association that perhaps the privileged few are those residents who pay nothing and get whatever those who pay get.

23. Medium term to Long term Planning so that Budgets can be more realistic and acceptable.

Medium and longer term planning is there. It would need annual review depending on what was or was not achieved during the year. All this however, is a pipe dream as it ALL boils down to money in the end. So until we have a better financial foundation, and the spring to keep the financial river flowing at a reasonable rate, we live from day to day almost, covering the barest of necessities, with only a modicum spare for repairs/maintenance or development.

24. Transparency and Communication of what is discussed at the Committee Meetings.

Realistically I trust this point is no longer an issue, as Andie has put in a great deal of personal time to address this issue. If there are still people who are not aware of what is going on in the committee meetings, either we do not have the correct mail/address details or perhaps they are not reading the circulars that go out. But please let Andie know if there are errors in our mailing list.

Deon will take this to the DGLO's for response and a solid DGLO proposal and action plan is scheduled for the next committee meeting. Thereafter, sub-committees representing both the DGLO's and the reserve will be formed, and a round-the table discussion held between both parties will take place before the end of the year.

Security: Theuns Trollip, who has been officially co-opted onto the committee, attended the first part of the meeting in his capacity as representative of the Community Policing Forum (CPF). The CPF is a SAPS crime prevention initiative in which areas within the Ba Phalaborwa municipal boundaries are divided into sectors and each of these assists the police with information related to crime etc. Theuns has established GNR as a sector and will be driving the initiative. Timothy and the Field Rangers will continue with their routine patrols in a supporting role.

Some owners have expressed concern that the committee intends closing down the Entrance Gate Security. Please be assured that this is certainly not the case, the committee has no intention of such action, and is fully aware of the vital security function it holds. The only reason for it to be closed down would be through lack of funds to cover the guard's salaries. The livelihood of the gate is dependant on the income generated through our levies. For those non-members this is covered within the Basic Levy. The future of the gate is in all our hands.

The SAPS, have requested that each employee on the reserve is fingerprinted. The police would conduct the operation and the fingerprints logged onto a central data base. Whether this is in transgression of basic human rights is not clear, as we have had conflicting reports on the legality of taking one's fingerprint without cause. Theuns will clarify this with the Police Commissioner.

Progress with the staff ID cards is ongoing. Oli Kuhnel and Paddy Beguin will be in touch with you if your staff member(s) is/are not on our database. We ask you please to assist us with letting Timothy know when you employ someone new, or a staff member leaves. The staff ID card is intended to help the warden, the gate and even owners easily identify whether a person is an employee or not, and ties in with the community policing forum initiative.

The ONGR Fence: The ONGR directors are scheduled to be on the reserve later this month, and Mike Joseph plans to utilise this opportunity discuss the removal of our boundary fence.

Policy re: the legalisation of pre-existing illegal dwellings on Grietjie: We have been advised by the hearing board dealing with the application for legalisation of the four dwellings on no. 117, that the reserve adopts an appropriate date before which buildings erected illegally on Grietjie would have the support of GNR in an application by an owner for legalisation of the dwellings.

Gert Lubbe who is in charge of Building Guidelines, is advising that 2002 be the cut off date. This was the year in which a document was signed between the Town Council and Grietjie owners regarding Municipal rates and Taxes. At the time, Grietjie was opposing the introduction of rates due to the non-delivery of municipal services to the reserve.

Gert will be meeting with the Town Planners to discuss the recommendation.

Municipal Rates and Taxes for Grietjie: Whilst on the subject of building regulations, Glenda Watson of Kruger Real Estate has forwarded Mike Joseph the following information regarding the municipality's stance on rates and taxes for Grietjie:

“As you know, the municipality is charging rates on all agricultural properties - including Silonque & Grietje. When I enquired yesterday how the rates were calculated it appeared that the rates were higher in the agricultural areas than in town.

Per Moses, the calculation is made as follows:

Price of property (less R15,000 for residential properties only) x .0085

Sharon Schmidt - who initiated the enquiry - has sent me the following (confirming that agricultural land should be taxed at .0021.) I've already sent this to the local DA councillor - who will have passed it on to the ratepayers association.

Very few people in Silonque or Grietjie are paying their municipal rates bill... mainly because the municipality make no effort to distribute them (all the ones I've seen are addressed to P O Box 1 Greitje). What happens is that when they sell, they discover they need a rates clearance certificate - and by then it's too late to fight... It's quicker easier and cheaper in the long term to pay the bill than hold up the sale.

People need to be aware... you may like to mention this in your newsletters - and if the accounts are wrong then they need to be sorted - either individually or collectively."

The issue of municipal rates has been bubbling under for quite some time, and it would be wise to heed this advice. Some Grietjie owners have already approached the council in lieu of their municipal rates, and it appears that until we can register as a Nature Reserve this is a responsibility we will need to deal with individually.

Proposed Enyathikulu Wildlife Estate: The scheduled hearing for the development on Enyathikulu (or 'Try', the farm bordering our northern boundary) has been postponed because the tribunal never materialised. Grietjie, together with ONGR and ORGR registered as an interested and affected party. Our primary angle of opposition to the development is the potential stress such a development will have on an already fragile water table. As reported in the previous newsletter, to substantiate our opposition we have contracted the services of a professional hydrologist to submit a report to the developer. However, results of the hydro-geological survey proved that there would be a sufficient water capacity to service such a development.

Last month Gert Lubbe distributed a memo to Grietjie owners motivating for assistance in financing the report. In the interim, and until funds are forthcoming, the R 7000.00 due has been paid out of GNR's current funds. No further monies will be spent on opposing the development, but Grietjie is to closely monitor that all guidelines are being adhered to during the course of the development.

Commercial Operations: The scheduled meeting of the CAP operators for the 19th October was cancelled due to lack of participation. One of the main objectives of the meeting was for the commercial operators to work together in formulating a fair and workable commercial levy. In the interim, the commercial levy will be billed out at the 2009/10 rate with an inflationary increase.

Mette Kristensen will be calling another meeting of the commercial operators together with the treasurer Scott Elliot, to review the commercial levy structure.

Please bear in mind that the committee strives to do as much as possible for the reserve, but is also dependant on the support and input from the community. Please assist us, particularly when we seek your input through meetings etc. it can only be of benefit to the future of the reserve.

Finance Report: Due to work commitments out of the country, Scott was unable to attend the meeting. The 2010/11 levy invoices have been sent out to all owners, and an analysis of the levies received to date was due to be discussed at the meeting. This item is now tabled for next month's

meeting, as the committee needs to ascertain where the reserve stands in terms of Basic levies paid, Association fees paid, previous non-payers now paying, services in lieu of levies confirmed etc.

Balule Christmas Party: Balule Nature Reserve will host its first Community Outreach Project named "A Christmas Dream" to be held on Balule on the 3rd December, 2010. The Hoedspruit S.A.P.S., Pick & Pay, Spar and Great North Transport have all offered assistance with the event.

The aim of "A Christmas Dream" is to ensure that the 40-50 underprivileged children, a large section being orphans from our neighbouring rural areas, will experience a most special and unforgettable day on the Reserve.

The days event includes a guided game drive, Christmas lunch at the ORGR club house on the Olifants River, and a visit from Father Christmas who will hand out presents generously supplied by the Hoedspruit community.

Each Balule region has been given the option to help with a financial donation in support of the community initiative. Grietjie is donating R 1000.00 towards the event in our endeavour to be both a valuable contributor to the initiative, and a role player within the Balule region.

Alien vegetation control along the Olifants River: After a long absence, Working for Water will resume their work along the Grietjie stretch of the Olifants River. Owners of the river plots are asked to be mindful of workers clearing alien vegetation from the riverbank. Timothy will be monitoring the process, and if you have any issues, please contact him for assistance.

Welcome: On behalf of the Grietjie community, a warm welcome to Mr Bernhard Haasbrook and his family, the new owners of No. 52. We wish you every happiness in your new bushveld home.

The next meeting of the Grietjie Committee is scheduled for:
Saturday 13th November 2010

Until then,
Go well
Andie