



UNDER THE LEADWOOD

by
Mike Joseph

September 2012

Feedback from the AGM

The AGM was held on 11 August on plot #73. Many thanks to the van Staden's for the use of their lodge. The committee elected at the AGM has substantial continuity from last year, and contrary to my intentions to stand down, I accepted nomination and election as chair as will be detailed in the minutes of the AGM.

We have a smaller committee this year, joined by Theuns Trollip as a member of the association, as well as now being assisted by a communications working group which strives to improve transparency and communications overall. I thank the volunteers of the communication workgroup, who give selflessly of their time to improve this important aspect of association business, and wish them well in their efforts, from which we should all benefit.

There were some lively debates and discussions at the AGM.

Firstly the issues of finances:

Neil Bridges, who remains as treasurer, presented various proposals to the gathering. After some lengthy discussions, the budget was approved for the year 2012/13, as well as the levy and subscription structures. There is a big drive this year to widen the base of contributions to the reserve, and members have been asked to try and convince non payers to make their contributions to the functioning of the reserve.

One has to ask the fundamental question: Do we want a nature reserve or not? On the assumption that we do (if we don't then we are all wasting our time and efforts as we will never succeed unless we have a desire by >80-90% of the owners who want to go this route), then it is incongruent that any monies are withheld. Running a reserve takes money, simple as that. If one has differences with mechanisms, and/or processes, then there are many ways of dealing with these in a mature and/or constituted fashion. But one has to accept that there will never be 100% agreement on many things. By not agreeing to the wish of the majority, then irrespective of what you say you want, this behaviour does not support the desire for a reserve. It just holds the association to ransom in its quest for a nature reserve.

There is no reason to withhold funds if you don't agree with a decision, or the committee or a process. Everything is in place for you make changes if the majority (or 75% for constitutional issues) of the members agree with your stance. BUT one must accept the outcomes. So I appeal to all who want us to become a formally registered reserve to, a) make sure they remain members in good standing and b) involve themselves in the general meetings so that you have your say and be able to influence outcomes if you are supported. No amount of in between bickering will draw us closer to this goal. We are in the boat together (I assume); perhaps we don't agree on HOW, or WHY but if we stop rowing we go nowhere. SO PLEASE ROW!

Secondly the issue of oftakes:

I understand this is an emotive issue. Many statements are made which represent opinions. And everyone is entitled to his/her opinion AND the opportunity to influence at a general meeting the membership for pursuit of a certain direction. It would appear that the majority of members in good standing at the AGM are generally happy with the way things are going, warts and all. Nonetheless, as with the comments on finances above, there are mechanisms to voice your opinions, or even change existing decisions (or the constitution) and these should be exercised by members in good standing, should they feel so inclined. But then outcomes must be accepted and respected. Any withdrawal because we don't agree with a decision or decisions is the same as if one stops rowing.

I would just like to know whether we want to row, or whether we want to fight? For me the option is clear as my swimming is not up to scratch.

ROADS

Work on Maggie's Hill will start soon, and by year end we should see some significant improvement in Maggie's Hill. I leave the details of what and how much in the capable hands of Hans and Pieter and look forward to a much improved surface on this portion of road.



SECURITY AT THE GATE

The implementation of the new gate access control system did not materialise. Theuns Trollip (who now holds the new security portfolio on the committee) has been given 3 months starting 1 September to get the system at the gate functioning to an acceptable standard. A full communiqué on the rules and regulations of gate access will be sent to all owners by end September. As a committee we are investigating clamping down fairly hard on night time pedestrians, contractor labour, identity cards, speed limits, and effectiveness of the gate access.

VEGETATION

The past few seasons of above average rainfall have resulted in a big improvement in the grass cover. Although far from where we want to be, the signs are very encouraging. Although this year we have not had much meaningful rain since the floods, there still exists a good grass load especially on the flat areas. However, the bush is extremely dry and is a considerable fire hazard so an appeal to all owners and their staff to exercise caution with fires.

There are a few areas of the reserve where bush encroachment is evident. We need to be mindful of the need for intervention in certain areas, and we as a reserve have been given permission by 2 landowners to conduct some trials with different encroachment intervention regimes this season. I am also doing some work on our plot in this regard. If you feel that you have areas that may be heading towards bush encroachment, particularly if we have the same trend next year, please contact Pieter (or myself) to discuss these issues. Thanks to the 2 landowners for their permission in this regard.

Alien invaders (inter alia, prickly pear, queen of the night, lantana etc) will form part of an initiative by the reserve manager to start an elimination program on these plants this year. Just a reminder (as presented by Pieter at the AGM), as landowner you are obliged by law to eradicate plants like Lantana, prickly pear etc. Please contact Pieter if you need a list of those noxious plants which you are obliged to attend to.

C.A.R.E

You are all aware of the tragic events which took place recently with regards to Rita Miljo. A really horrific end to a human life. However, looking forward, the relationship between the reserve and CARE would appear to have taken a very positive step forward and channels of communication are now open and regular contact is envisaged. We look forward to an improving relationship with CARE for mutual benefit.

Finally this may be a bit premature, but Grietjie welcomes back Peter and Truss Meier who have bought a property on Grietjie and will take up residence on their new plot once their home is built.

From Under the Leadwood

Kind regards

Mike