



Mutual Heights

News from your Trustees

Edition 46: 12th January 2020

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New Managing Agents

As indicated in the web message last month, your trustees have undertaken an extended review of the management of our sectional title scheme, and the management of the building, and we invited proposals from selected management agencies in order to understand our options.

Following a careful review of three proposals, and meetings with the involved parties, trustees decided to invite [Faircape Management Services \(FMS\)](#) to take over the management of our scheme and the building. The decision was unanimous, and it was based on a detailed examination of procedures, capacity, relationship management, and cost. The migration is now under way and it is intended that the new managing agents will be fully "in place" on 1st March 2020.

Owners will hear from the new managing agents shortly and it will be necessary for you to confirm details of your bank account and so on: please be ready to assist. As well as routine financial, administrative and maintenance services FMS offer a range of other services (yet to be negotiated and agreed in detail) including: HR management, insurance management, legal advice, utilities management, property sales and leasing, data communications, camera management and laundry services. Any comments or questions from owners and residents will assist us in finalising all the arrangements.

FMS have their own data management "Portal" that will provide owners with direct access to many of their services. More about this will follow. In the meantime our community web site will continue to operate so long as it is useful, pending a full review of all the options, to provide the best data and information management that can be arranged. Again, comments are invited.

We have worked with Property Exponents from the start, and on your behalf I want to thank Charles Keefer, Clint Riddin, and the team, for 14 years of hard work and support. As I have already said elsewhere, it all started with excitement and enthusiasm, we were thrown into eight years of (successful) litigation dealing with the damp ingress, then into the era of short-stay visitors, failing lifts, and massive parties in the Banking Hall; we now look forward to a steadier and more routinely managed regime.

Security

Trustees have initiated a detailed review of security. We have been fortunate to have avoided any serious incidents but the level of petty crime, and the perception of greater risks, have both brought this to the top of the agenda. It is closely related of course to the short-stay visitor phenomenon. It is simply not acceptable that the management just do not know who occupies the building at any time. The Sectional Title Schemes Management Act requires that owners register any others that take occupation, and in case of an emergency of unacceptable behaviour it is important to know who is responsible for what happens.

You must expect that there will be much stricter procedures for managing access to the building in the coming year, but we want them to be proportionate to the risks; hence, if you are involved in any kind of a security-related incident will you please make sure that the

security desk is notified? The 24 hour number at the front desk is **021 465 2528** – please make sure it's in your phone NOW. All security incidents are now recorded on the web site so that we can track them continuously, and trustees get weekly reports about these and other things.

Visitor management

So, let's talk about visitor management. There is a procedure to register visitors ahead of arrival, and all those that we know about are listed on a daily report at the front desk. They can be welcomed and checked in with a simple signature.

However, we know that the majority of visitors are not registered, and some newly-arrived visitors are collecting keys to apartments (and to the building) from the mailboxes at the Parliament Street entrance so that they can avoid registration. At the front door, this causes Jose (the concierge) to have to stop visitors and collect data so that they can be registered. At the Parliament Street door, this means that we simply do not know who is arriving. In the past two years, Jose has captured data from more than 1,000 visitors who were not expected. Then, he often has to assist them when they have been given inadequate instructions about access and procedures. Dayyaan has had to assist confused visitors at the Parliament Street door who have no idea what they must do nor where they must go.

This cannot continue. The cost of dealing with short-stay visitors must accrue to those owners who choose to offer short-stay accommodation. As the year proceeds, you must expect that owners (or their agents) will have to make clear arrangements to pre-register visitors, OR accept the cost when visitors arrive who are not pre-registered. This is intimately concerned with security, of course. More news about this in due course.

The Lift project

I would like to be able to report that the lift refurbishment project is well on the way, but the procedures to get Western Cape Heritage approval took an inordinate time, and then the construction and engineering industry holidays started. The delay concerned a small but important matter: the lift doors are 'heritage', and there had to be consultation with experts about the means to deal with fire risks at the same time that the heritage qualities of the doors were preserved. Some movement has now started and there will be further reports during the year.

Geysers and insurance

The cost of our insurance has increased greatly in recent years, partly (mostly, even) because of water damage that arises from burst geysers. **Geysers are the responsibility of owners, and they need regular checks.** Also, when there are leaks it is critical to turn the water supply off immediately. We are discussing the possibility of reducing the cost of insurance *if we can show that owners have had their geysers checked recently, and if there is leakage protection that turns the supply off.* We already know that we will only get a reduction if – over a period of time, the rate of failure and the cost of concomitant claims has reduced.

We will be proceeding with these ideas, and where there are costs arising from geysers that have not been checked, or where there is no protection device, it may be necessary to put all the costs to the owner's levy account.

For more information you can contact [Dayyaan Ismail](#).

Pets

There have been reports of dogs being allowed to defecate in the building, and this is one more thing that has to be managed. Permission to have small dogs and other pets in the building is granted according to a set of conditions, but the records of who has that

permission are lost in the mists of historical emails. The new managing agents will be asked to improve the management of pets.

New chairperson

I am now in my 12th year as chair of the trustees, and given the change of managing agents this is the right time for me to stand down and let someone else take over. IF all goes to plan, I will be standing down at the end of February. So, this will be the last of my newsletters. With my wife Ann I will continue to spend as much time in the building as we can, so we are not going away. But we do have retirement accommodation in Riebeeck Kasteel and so we will not be here continuously.

I wish you well for 2020 and the future, and for fulfilling times in our extraordinary building.

With good wishes,
on behalf of the Trustees,



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Check out "Mutual Building" on Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_Building